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ABSTRACT

Providing alternatives to the way grammar is taught, this proceedings includes every paper (or summary) except one delivered at a conference on the future of grammar in American schools. Papers in the proceedings are: "Keynote: The Future of Grammar in American Schools" (Martha Kolln); "Approaches to Grammar: Teaching & Otherwise" (Kathy Lyday-Lee); "What Kind of Grammar Should We Teach in College?" (Cornelia Paraskevas-Shepard); "A Review of Grammar Textbooks" (Robert Sirabian); "Personal Editing Workbooks for Composition Students" (Sally Joranko); "Seeing as the Brain Sees: The Cognitive Process of Instruction (CPOI) Applied to Grammar" (Madlon Laster); "Challenging Misconceptions about Using One-to-One Tutorials to Teach Grammar/Style" (Kim Ballard and Linda Haynes); "Grammar Competency as Essential Knowledge for ESL Students Entering Professional Discourse Communities" (Linda Yost); "Blue-Jay Grammar" (Jean Murphy); "Arguments about Grammar: The Usage Books" (Maurice Scharton and Janice Neuleib); "Integrating Grammar into the Process Reading and Writing Approach" (Chrystena Chrzanowski); "The Role of Grammar Teaching in Higher Education" (George J. Oliver); "Arcade Grammar: Grammar and Syntax as a Recreational Activity" (Pat Wellington and Charlotte Perlin); "Teaching Grammar through Journalism" (Tina Lesher); "Quintilian, Syntax and Computer-Aided Instruction" (R. C. Hoover); "The Effects of Personality Type on Grammar Instruction" (Irene Brosnahan and Janice Neuleib); "Communicative Approaches to Teaching Grammar" (Macey B. Taylor); and "Teaching Grammar without the Grammar Books" (Ed Vavra). A list of conference participants concludes the proceedings. (RS)

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ED 397 439

Proceedings of a Conference Held at Shenandoah College, Winchester, VA
August 10 & 11, 1990

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The Future of Grammar in American Schools

How does one thank the dozens of people who help one's dream come true? When I founded Syntax in the Schools, seven years ago, it was almost impossible to get an article about pedagogical grammar published in any educational journal. Since then, we have not only had the newsletter, but also a conference (portions of which are also available on videotape). These proceedings include every paper (or a summary thereof) delivered at the conference, except one. My first thanks, therefore, go to the presenters at the conference, and also to the many teachers who wrote articles for the newsletter, thereby keeping it alive. I would like to thank everyone by name, but for fear of leaving someone out, I will limit myself to one, most important person. Dr. Warren DeArment, Dean of Arts & Sciences at Shenandoah College, supported the newsletter through some very lean times. Without his support, the newsletter would have folded, and there would not have been a conference. To him I am sincerely grateful.

I have attempted to thank the presenters by reproducing their papers as faithfully as I could. (I am sure there are still a few errors.) Numerous people have remarked about the amount of "work" that I put into the newsletter, the conference, and the proceedings. Most of this work is done at home, and I want to thank my wife, Toni, who regularly encourages me to "go do [my] work," and also my mother, who, over the years, has assisted me in purchasing much of the computer equipment without which the work could not all get done.

The work is important because educators need to discuss how and why grammar is being taught. When people first here of Syntax in the Schools, they usually assume that we support "traditional" grammar. Although some members of ATEG may do so, most don't. Most members are sincerely upset at the way grammar is being taught. They want to see alternatives. But to find and develop those alternatives, we need a free and open discussion -- exactly what we have NOT had for the last two decades. But that is exactly what Syntax supports. I am looking forward to our next conference, which will be held here at Pennsylvania College of Technology on July 15 & 16, 1991.

I am claiming a copyright for these proceedings in the name of ATEG, but the rights belong entirely to the individual presenters. Their addresses and phone numbers are on the last page of the proceedings.

Ed Vavra
Pennsylvania College of Technology
November 30, 1990

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Keynote Address:

The Future of Grammar in American Schools

Martha Kolln
Associate Professor of English
Penn State University

Here we are at a conference with the unlikely title of "The Future of Grammar in American Schools." I find this quite amazing. When was the last time you attended a conference where grammar was the topic of discussion —even for one session? Here's a conference where the G word appears in the title of almost every paper. Truly amazing!

And the conferees. Look at us! We're here because we think there's a place in our classrooms for the study of grammar; we think that grammar has a future.

We're here, of course — in this place — today — because Ed Vavra thinks that grammar has a future. We're here because a few years ago Ed Vavra got mad — and decided he wasn't going to take it anymore. And he did what most of us don't do — he put his money where his mouth is — his time and his money. He put himself in the role of the NCTE's hair shirt, reminding them — nagging them incessantly — that they have given short shrift to grammar in their publications — that they, in fact, have deliberately excluded articles about grammar pedagogy. I've seen his documentation of that charge, in which he examines all of the NCTE's publication for the past six or so years. And we know the results. When they wouldn't change their ways, he started his own journal — and Syntax in the Schools was born.

Last month at the Penn State Rhetoric Conference, when I mentioned to a friend that I was coming to this conference, he said, "Oh yes — I heard about that conference — that's the one where you have to support grammar or you're not welcome." I didn't argue with him — although, as far as I know, Ed didn't include a "Grammar Loyalty Oath" with the registration form. But the result may be the same. Here we are, a dedicated band of grammar revolutionaries — a grammar cabal — with Ed Vavra as a leader. He may, in fact, be remembered some day as the Sam Adams of the grammar revolution.

I think all of us know how hard Ed has worked to get Syntax in the Schools going — and to keep it going. In every issue he pleads with us all for articles — and sometimes ends up writing the entire issue himself. And I think we know how long and hard Ed has worked to get us all together here this weekend. It seems to me that the only fitting way to begin this conference is with a tribute to — and a round of applause for — Ed Vavra.

Let me begin my comments about grammar by dispelling what may be a mistaken notion: the notion that we all agree about what the future of grammar ought to be. Just because we're all gathered here under the same grammar umbrella doesn't mean we all all agree with each other. I admire and respect Ed Vavra, and I'm grateful for the mission he has undertaken on our behalf. That doesn't mean Ed and I see eye to eye on every aspect of teaching grammar. In fact, we don't. And Ed has said more than once in Syntax that he doesn't agree with everything he prints there.

My friend was right when he characterized this as a conference for people who like grammar — that is to say, a conference for like-minded people on the subject of grammar. But that doesn't mean we all agree on all of the questions about when and how to teach it, on questions about its future. We do, of course, share a great deal of common ground. Let me outline what I think some of that common ground is.

First, we all recognize what a can of worms the word itself opens up —the word "grammar." We all understand its multiple meanings — at least we understand the fact that it has multiple meanings — and when we write or speak about grammar in any formal way, we make clear what our particular meaning is. At an NCTE convention some years ago I heard a paper by Sidney Greenbaum outlining fourteen definitions for grammar. I'm more accustomed to differentiating maybe three or four or five — grammar as our internal system of rules, grammar as a subject in the curriculum, grammar as linguistic ettiquette — and one or two other variations on those themes.

The world at large, I suspect — and that world includes our students' parents and potential employers — uses the word almost exclusively in its "usage and mechanics" sense. Unfortunately, that world also includes many among our own profession. For example, Peter Elbow, in his book *Writing with Power*

[Oxford, 1981], gets to the discussion of grammar in a chapter entitled "The Last Step: Getting Rid of Grammar Mistakes." He clearly equates grammar with cleaning up errors.

A more important patch of gound we have in common is the outrage we share with Ed, that the NCTE, the powers that be, have done nothing to clarify the problem of definition. The powers that be, in fact, have become the problem. And all of us here agree on this, I'm sure, that there is no "proof" that teaching grammar is harmful. Bear with me while I briefly review some history and explain why this needs to be said.

Back in 1963 the NCTE published a report called *Research in Written Composition* [written by Richard Braddock, Richard Lloyd-Jones, and Lowell Schoer]. There is one sentence in that report — a one-sentence paragraph on pages 37 and 38 — that has kept the report from disappearing into oblivion, one sentence that has been quoted probably thousands of times in the past 27 years. I'm not exaggerating — it is quoted over and over again. It is the only sentence in that report that has lived on. Here are the 56 words that changed our profession's attitude towards grammar. I call it the "harmful effects" statement:

> "In view of the widespread agreement of research studies based upon many types of students and teachers, the conclusion can be stated in strong and unqualified terms: the teaching of formal grammar has a negligible or, because it usually displaces some instruction and practice in actual composition, even a harmful effect on the improvement of writing."

In an article in the October 1977 issue of *College Composition and Communication* ["The Relation of Formal Grammar to Composition"], Janice Neulieb took the authors of that report to task for making such a strong and unqualified statement in light of their own previous paragraph, which begins: "Uncommon, however, is carefully conducted research which studies the effect of formal grammr on actual composition over an extended period of time." In other words, the authors admitted that the research on which that quotable statement was based was sloppy research — and they said it anyway. And in the May 1981 issue of *CCC* ["Closing the Books on Alchemy"], I examined some of the studies that grammar detractors were citing as proof that studying grammar is useless. Believe me — and Janice —there is no such proof.

The only question that researchers have examined, as I far as I know, is this: If our students study grammar in a formal setting — that is, in a class period set aside to learn about syntax, about words and phrases and clauses and sentence types — will that knowledge make them better writers? That limited question has been pursued for close to ninety years. The Hoyt study, published in 1906, asked it — and came up with "no" for an answer. And dozens of studies since have done so as well.

I must admit I have a suspicion about those researchers who have pursued the question so doggedly. I suspect that not one single one of them expected or wanted the answer to be "yes." Some of those studies are so badly designed they are laughable. In one, the grammar lessons consisted of usage rules which the students memorized and recited in unison. Why would anyone expect such an activity to improve writing?

The extent of the harm that the "harmful effects" statement has had on our profession is hard to calculate — but it's easy to document. In my 1981 article I cite a number of textbooks in English Education — textbooks on methods of teaching secondary English — that base their grammar philosophy on the proposition that we shouldn't be teaching grammar because it's harmful. And certainly that philosophy permeates composition at the college level. It has done so for years. I mentioned earlier Peter Elbow's advice on grammar in *Writing with Power*. For him, grammar knowledge has no connection to power, although it may come in handy at the end of the writing process. Here is what Elbow says:

> Learning grammar is a formidable task that takes crucial energy away from working on your writing, and worse yet, the process of learning grammar interferes with writing: it heightens your preoccupation with mistakes as you write out each word and phrase, and makes it almost impossible to achieve that undistracted attention to your thoughts and experiences as you write that is so crucial for strong writing (and sanity). For most people, nothing helps their writing so much as learning to ignore grammar as they write [p. 169].

The echo of the 1963 "harmful effects" statement could hardly be clearer.

It seems to me that the real problem with the research on grammar is that same old question that keeps getting asked. We've now learned that if we expect knowledge of grammar to have a practical value, to somehow help our students become better writers, then we shouldn't be teaching it in a formal, separate class. The question researchers ought to be asking is a follow-up one: If this formal method of studying grammar doesn't work, then what will? What can we do to make the study of grammar useful for writers? As far as I know, no one has asked that question. No one has designed a study in which grammar is taught in conjunction with writing, in a functional way, and then tested the results.

I haven't carried out such a study, but I do ask that question. And in my writing classes I answer it by helping my students apply their conscious knowledge of grammar to their writing?" I include grammar lessons that will help students make choices. I call the method "rhetorical grammar." Rhetorical grammar is, in fact, my answer to the questions about the future of grammar.

But there's another, corollary, question, too, that all of those studies of formal grammar suggest, a question I think we may be hearing something about in one of the papers later today: And that is this: So what if the study of grammar doesn't improve writing ability? Can't we make a case for the study of grammar as an end in itself? Shouldn't our students understand the structure of their language for its own sake? They study the structure of a lot of things about society and nature in elementary school and junior high and high school; they study the structure of the universe, the structure of their bodies: they learn the names of battles and the names of their bones and the steps in cell division. Shouldn't they also study the structure of language, the part of them that defines their humanity?

It's possible we may not agree that grammar knowledge has value for its own sake or that there's a place for that study in the curriculum. I may have stepped off the common ground here. But I'm sure that we, the members of this particular discourse community, agree that grammar belongs in the language arts curriculum, even though questions like when and how may not have clear-cut answers. And I assume we all recognize that the study of grammar means more than the study of usage and mechanics.

We are here, we of this particular grammar community, because we know that the power of grammar goes far beyond grammar as remedy. It's ironic that in Elbow's *Writing with Power*, he attributes no power at all to a writer's knowing grammar. Yet I think that empowerment is the very reason for teaching and for learning grammar. We empower students when we help them become good writers. And being a good writer means being in control. Helping students understand the grammar of their language gives them that control. This kind of grammar teaching is what I call rhetorical grammar.

I like to quote Richard Weaver's statement in *The Ethics of Rhetoric* [Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1953] when I talk about control: "A language," Weaver says,

> has certain abilities or even inclinations which the wise user can draw into the service of his own rhetorical effort. Using a language may be compared to riding a horse; much of one's success depends upon an understanding of what it can and will do [pp. 116-17].

To teach grammar from a rhetorical perspective, then, is to help students understand what language can and will do — or, perhaps more accurately, to understand what they as writers can do with their langauge. Like rhetoric, which deals with the choices writers and speakers make in light of a particular purpose and audience, rhetorical grammar deals with grammatical choices, with giving students the power to access their internalized inventory of grammatical structures, to add new structures to their inventory, and to understand the rhetorical effects of the choices they make. Rhetorical grammar is an exercise in consciousness raising.

This is my philosophy of teaching grammar at the college level. But I see no reason why it can't be taught like this at every level, instead of the way we're doing it now. There's obviously something wrong with the way we're doing it now. (And, as you know, we are teaching it out there — in spite of the NCTE's warning labels.) We're teaching it, as we always have, with disastrous results. We somehow produce intimidated students that eventually turn into intimidated adults.

Who among us, on introducing ourselves or being introduced as an English teacher, has not heard the inane remark "I'd better watch my language"? If I call myself a "grammar teacher," the reaction is really defensive. What is it that people remember about their grammar classes anyway? Or maybe it's that they remember nothing at all.

Even teachers, apparently, have this aversion to grammar. When Frank O'Hare, some years ago, introduced his definitive study on sentence combining, he did so with the promise that this teaching method would appeal to teachers who "don't like grammar." In the fall 1985 issue of *National Forum*, the Phi Kappa Phi journal, Geoffrey Nunberg claims that teachers teach grammar "out of a sense of duty, without any real enthusiasm. Teachers," he says, "are not proud of their success in teaching grammar, no more than electrical engineers would be proud of their success in rewiring lamps" ["An Apology for Grammar," p. 12]

Why is it assumed that English teachers "don't like grammar"? And why is it assumed that such a condition is ok, that it's normal for any red-blooded English teacher to not like grammar? Do you suppose there are math teachers in our schools who don't like fractions? Are there history teachers who don't like presidential elections?

Maybe there is something wrong with grammar. Maybe we ought to take a long hard look at the way we teach it, at what we teach — and when we start teaching it.

How do we teach it? The Warriner series — which I understand is the biggest seller in the country — begins, in book one, by telling students, in the introduction, that they have understood English since before they started school. Then it begins the systematic study of the sentence as though they hadn't really understood English before they started school at all. The terminology is straight traditional: the sentence as a complete thought, the noun as a person, place, or thing, and other such misinformation. And exercise after numbing exercise. And book two? Same thing, starting again with the sentence as a complete thought. Book three? Same old thing. Our students who have studied grammar have, for the most part, started off each year with the same old parts-of-speech and definitions. In spite of our words to the contrary, we treat English like every other subject in the curriculum, as facts to be memorized. In math and biology and history and other classes in the curriculum, at least each year begins at a higher level, with new material to cover. Not grammar. Here is the one subject in the curriculum in which the students are already experts — unconscious experts it is true, but nevertheless experts — and they are treated as idiots. It's no wonder they and their teachers can't stand grammar.

We are teaching the wrong material at the wrong time. Here is the way Geoffrey Nunberg describes his grammar education:

> In the course of my own education, I calculate, I was taught about run-on sentences at least seven times. If I finally caught on, it was not because constant repetition finally drilled the concept into my head, but because I reached a point when I began to understand what a sentence was, and what a comma was for. If we believe that the rules of handbook grammar should be taught as a means of pointing students towards the rules of the real grammar of written English, then it obviously makes no sense to teach a handbook rule before a student is in a position to understand the principle it exemplifies. I would argue, for example, that it is pointless to try to teach seventh-graders that nonrestrictive relative clauses must be set off by commas, if only because they are not yet sophisticated enough to appreciate most of the rhetorical uses of nonrestrictive clauses [p. 15].

I think Ed Vavra is getting at much the same thing in the paper he distributed — "Teaching Grammar without the Grammar Books" — when he discusses the stages of cognitive development and ways in which our teaching can make use of that knowledge.

I agree with Ed when he suggests we toss out the books. I would certainly toss out those books that make no use of the insights that linguists have given us. I believe it would be better during the fifth and sixth grades for youngsters to study language as a social and cultural phenomenon, to help them see themselves as grammar experts rather than subject them to the traditional categories and terminology of Warriners before they're ready for it — and make them feel dumb. Grammar ought to be studied from a positive point of view, not the negative, error-correction kind of enterprise that it is. And at that age they should be writing without fear of subject-verb disagreement or problems with the nominative case after linking verbs — which is one of the fifth-grade topics. How can dull error-hunting exercises do anything but blunt their enthusiasm for language? I'm not sure I go along with discussing prepositions in the third grade, as Ed has suggested, but I certainly go along with the discovery method he is advocating — with students looking for the prepositions they themselves use.

There are many kinds of exercises we can use to heighten our students' consciousness about their own langauge use. Here's one I use with students in my college-level grammar classes — but one I think even fifth or sixth graders would profit from and enjoy. I found this one in an article in the March 1988 issue of *Harpers*. Author Cullen Murphy reported on a 1923 study in which the lexicographer G. H. McKnight identified nine words in our language that comprise one-quarter of all spoken words. Murphy did some research of written texts, ranging from an IRS document to the owners manual of his car to the "Wizard of Id" comic strip, and came up with similar results. I should mention that I did the same thing — counting my use of those nine words in my prose — and sure enough, the result was just under 25 percent. The nine words are *and, be, have, it, of, the, to, will,* and *you*. Your students will guess them all — and they need not have studied the parts of speech to do so. There's a great parts-of-speech lesson here for the students to learn — when they see that there are no form-class words among thse nine — no nouns or verbs or adjectives or adverbs.

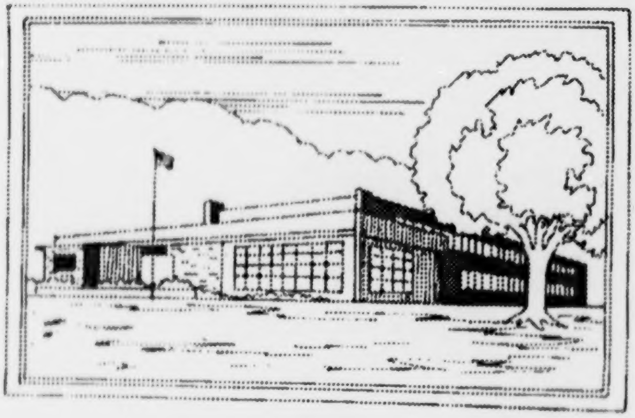
Seventh grade is probably soon enough — maybe even eighth or ninth — to start applying abstract rules to the students' use of language. In the world of Warriner's, of course, ninth graders open their books to yet another description of the sentence as a complete thought. There are, of course, better series than Warriner's. I have seen them — books based on structural grammar, books that differentiate between form class words and structure words, that use inflectional and derivational morphemes, for example, as clues to word classes. But I worry, as Ed does in his paper, that we expect young students to engage in reasoning that is beyond their power to do so.

I would like to see the detailed study of grammar put off until high school, where I think it should be taken up in conjunction with rhetoric and composition. Topics like subordination and modification and style become meaningful in the context of audience and purpose. I would hope that real understanding could replace some of the myths that our students now bring with them from high school to college. I also hope that the rhetorical study of grammar would continue throughout their composition courses at the college level.

I don't know what the future of grammar will be. I do know that the traditional program, often beginning in fifth grade, is too entrenched to be easily changed. The status quo is encouraged by all of those nervous people — parents and employers — who worry that unless we pound those grammar lessons into their heads, our kids will be illiterate: Theyll neither spell nor punctuate properly — and those, of course, are the public features of writing. Teachers and principals and parents worry, too, about what will happen to test scores?

I am hoping that a new paradigm, in the Kuhnian sense, will emerge. Composition went through a paradigm shift some fifteen or twenty years ago, from a product-centered to a process approach. I would like to see emerge a new paradigm — a positive, rhetorical approach to the study of grammar rather than the negative, remedial approach that I believe now dominates our textbooks and classrooms.

I suspect I'm talking about a revolution. Who knows? Maybe this weekend at this conference in Winchester, Virginia, we have fired the first shot.



OBSERVATIONS:
Teaching Grammar at Elon College, North Carolina

Kathy J. Lyday-Lee
Elon College, Elon, N.C.

When I saw the notice for this conference, I became interested because of the situation that I am in at my institution—a college whose writing director places Peter Elbow on a pedestal and where grammar is a dirty word. Many of the professors on campus complain about the lack of good grammar, but very few of my department members feel that a grammar course should be taught. I felt that the conference would be a good place to brainstorm with others in my field about the problems of teaching grammar and reconciling the role of grammar with the teaching of writing. This presentation is more observation-based than scholarly, and involves no research or experiments—just eight years of full time experience, seven years before that as a graduate teaching assistant at two state institutions in Tennessee—years of working in the trenches with freshmen and sophomores as well as upper-level students.

Before I discuss the current situation and the future I hope for, I should offer some background information about what I teach. Eight years ago I was hired by Elon College—a small, private, 4-year liberal arts institution—to teach history of the English language, linguistics, grammar, American literature, and composition. When I arrived at Elon in the summer of 1982, I discovered that books had already been ordered for my classes and that the text for my advanced grammar class consisted of a transformational-generative workbook. The linguistics course in the spring had traditionally been a continuation of the grammar class. This was not exactly what I had in mind for a 200-level grammar class. And while T-G grammar was not my forte, I decided that I COULD teach it—I thought. At the same time I discovered that the freshman composition classes did not include using a handbook—even as a desk reference. Now, please remember that I had just graduated from the University of Tennessee, where every other building is named for John C. Hodges, and we used the HARBRACE COLLEGE HANDBOOK as a bible—used theme folders, marked numbers in the margins to guide our students in their corrections, required that they write rules on the back of their essays, and even filed their papers in a theme vault for posterity. This was a bit rigid, BUT to go from such strict regulations to none at all was frightening for a new professor. I wasn't sure how I was going to teach writing improvement to freshmen without a grammar reference. I was certainly NOT anxious to go back to the HARBRACE method, but I needed a little more security. What this meant, of course, was that my grammar students at Elon had come through at least a freshman year with no grammar review. We had no Writing Center at the time, no trained tutors in writing or grammar—virtually no resources for the students, except me.

I administered a diagnostic grammar test to my Advanced Grammar students—mainly out of curiosity—and discovered that only a handful of students could give me five of the eight parts of speech. None could list all eight. Their basic knowledge of terminology was minimal, and most of them could not define concepts such as case, tense, voice, verbals, sentence types, etc. And I was supposed to teach Chomsky! We muddled through the first semester working on sentence structure, parts of speech, function, punctuation, and composition—hardly the advanced grammar class I had envisioned. When I discussed the class and its problems with my colleagues, they were sympathetic but not helpful. "No," they said. "We should NOT be in the business of teaching grammar in composition classes." "Yes, these students should have learned this information BEFORE they came to college." Yes, perhaps they SHOULD have, but most of them had fallen through the holes of the system; many had gotten good grades in college composition—perhaps even above-average grades in high school English—and didn't seem to have problems in their writing, but they were all in the class for the same reason—to improve their knowledge of the structure and terminology of English. Teaching T-G grammar would not fill this void, so I began planning a different class for the following year since the word "advanced" was obviously inappropriate. The next time I taught the course I called it what it really was: Fundamentals of Grammar. I decided to focus on terminology, structure, theories about usage vs. rules, and other topics my students seemed to need review in: punctuation, agreement, case, etc. My colleagues muttered beneath their breaths, but none argued adamantly against my changes, and most conceded that someone needed to fill this gap.

In my third year at the college, the department began using an optional handbook suggested by our Writing Director; we changed every two years or so—Director and handbooks—so no real consistency was achieved. I could not see that many teachers or students were using it in their instruction or writing. The enrollment in my Fundamentals class continued to climb to 40, and I used a handbook and a workbook with supplemental handouts on Reed-Kellogg and phrase-structure diagramming. My class became the place where students came to review the language they thought they had known for many years. I frequently had juniors and seniors in the class—business, communication, science, and math majors who wanted to polish their skills before entering the job market. As simplistic as this seemed to me—a basic review of grammar—the students had difficulty with much of it. I found myself comparing the course to running whitewater rapids, with the difficult Class IV rapids coming at the beginning with parts of speech, function of words in a sentence, and verbals; easier Class I and II rapids in the middle with case, agreement, punctuation, and usage; and the moderately difficult Class III at the end with sentence diagramming—and in a good semester, some transformations. When I questioned that the course might be too easy for the English majors, they reassured me that they needed this kind of review—especially those who planned to teach.

I've taught the course for eight years now, and the content hasn't changed much. I've gone through many handbooks and workbooks, and more recently, computer software. I've used Watkins/Dillingham PRACTICAL ENGLISH HANDBOOK, Little Brown's HANDBOOK/WORKBOOK, HANDBOOK/WORKBOOK OF CURRENT ENGLISH, and for the last three years a workbook called ENGLISH SIMPLIFIED and the Simon and Schuster HANDBOOK/WORKBOOK FOR WRITERS—the handbook that our department decided to require. This doesn't mean that everyone uses it actively in the composition classes, but incoming freshmen must buy it (can't resell it at Elon) and are strongly encouraged to use it in all their classes. Since Elon has a writing across the disciplines structure in place, every professor has a copy of the text and is urged to refer students to the handbook—in any class where questions about grammar, writing, and research are raised. I have had, however, a lingering dissatisfaction that I'm not really doing enough of the important things, spending too much time on review and not enough on theory and how grammar relates to writing.

Do I enjoy teaching grammar to twenty year olds? Yes. Do I like the fact that I have to? Of course not. I'd much rather teach a brief overview of the basics and concentrate on structure and theory. I dream of the day that I can use a book like Kolln's UNDERSTANDING ENGLISH or Lester's GRAMMAR IN THE CLASSROOM, but until recently I wouldn't have considered either except for an upper level, truly advanced, grammar class. And because I teach so many other courses, an Advanced Grammar course is out of the question right now. This spring, however, I may make the leap to a more substantial course and throw away the crutches of a handbook/workbook combination because of some changes that have occurred in the last two years—changes that could not only alter the shape of the course I teach, but also how many sections of it are needed.

Our English major requires that students take two upper-level language related course (history of the English language, linguistics, rhetoric, writing for the professions), so some of our majors like to use the 200-level grammar course as a springboard into the more difficult ones. If, however, a student is in secondary education—English certification, he/she MUST take Fundamentals of Grammar; many elementary and middle grades majors are being advised now to do the same, although it is not yet a requirement. This past spring, I had double the number of education students in my class than in previous years, a trend which I see continuing and perhaps increasing. This factor means that for this group of future educators I must be able to help them relate the practical aspects of learning grammar to the reality of teaching it—the "whys" of teaching it—especially on the secondary level. To add another twist, two years ago, Elon was one of two private colleges in North Carolina selected to participate in the North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program (four years paid tuition in return for four years teaching in the North Carolina public school system). This program is part of our Honors program, so the students we get are bright and industrious—not the typical student I have in the fundamentals class. So, my challenge now is to make the class rigorous enough for the honors students (including the Teaching Fellows), thorough enough for the education majors, and basic enough for the "reviewees." This past spring I had ten education majors—six of whom were secondary education English majors and in the Honors program. I felt it necessary to work with these students as a group outside of class, to discuss methods of teaching grammar to primary and secondary students. The English department offers a secondary education methods course during the senior year, but the grammar unit is very brief, so I encouraged the future teachers to teach units dealing with group work assignments during the semester, and occasionally they delivered a mini-lecture. All of this was optional, but they eagerly agreed to try. I have proposed a separate class for education majors and our Writing Center tutors, but was told that the North Carolina education board does not approve of such segregation in its education curriculum. What I plan to propose this spring is that a one-hour pedagogy workshop be taken in conjunction with the class—an optional, informal hour where we could as a group explore the philosophy and theories of teaching grammar and using grammar in the teaching of writing. The fundamentals class is a good course for those students who need a review—for whatever purpose—but students going into the classroom or the Writing Center need not only to know how to use grammar correctly but how to teach others as well. I feel that good knowledge of the English language is as necessary to those teaching first grade as it is to those who teach high school. These additional education requirements/recommendations will also add more students to the class, so the possibility of offering a section each semester or two in the Spring looms in the foreground as well.

I see these new circumstances as a creative challenge. I actually enjoy teaching the fundamentals of our language, but I feel that students should be getting more grammatical and writing instruction in secondary school. Some students come to college with a good structural background while others haven't had any grammar since middle school. Part of the responsibility falls on parents and society, but I'm not convinced that a grammar class in college is wrong; at least students have a good reference book in which to find answers. How really necessary is it to know the difference between a participle and a gerund, passive and active voice, a comma splice and a run-on? The truth is that students CAN be good writers without knowing the technical aspects of grammar, but they can also be much better, more versatile writers once they know that there are more options for them with regard to structure and punctuation. Unfortunately, the majority of my students are minimal writers and readers, and have very little exposure to the flexibility of their language. Writing is emphasized to some degree in nearly every discipline at Elon through papers, reports, essay examinations, and so forth, and many students feel deficient and insecure in their ability to use the language effectively. A Fundamentals of Grammar course offers more tangible help than any other course offered through our department and perhaps seems to be more appropriate for their needs.

Elon has changed greatly in eight years—as has its students and its English department. We have a cadre of excellent writing tutors (many of whom want to take the grammar class as a review), a Writing Center where student tutors help students with writing assignments in all disciplines, and a literacy program where students work as adult education volunteers. Teaching or improving grammar basics is NOT the purpose of any of these programs, nor is it encouraged, BUT knowing the terminology and relationships of words and structures helps the tutors to help their students in their writing and reading. In fact, some tell me that many times diagramming a sentence is better than an hour of explanation. Teaching grammar in freshman composition is not open for discussion at Elon—although all of us do it behind closed office doors—and philosophically I'm not convinced that it should be, since two-thirds of our freshmen don't need it. The ones that do get it somewhere during college, either through their teachers or tutors in our Learning Resource Center (separate from the Writing Center). A class such as the one I teach does fill a need and has helped many students, and even colleagues in other departments are beginning to recommend that some of their students take it. I am looking forward to the day when I can order copies of a real grammar text—not a handbook—and dust off my notes on grammar theory that I've been collecting for eight years. I can't do this though until the majority of my students know that a direct object is NOT a part of speech, that a preposition can't be a subject, and that there is a difference between "had gone" and "had went." Until that day, I will continue to plod along through the basics, assign endless exercises, send students to the chalkboard to diagram sentences—and keep current with the "real" grammar books—for the day my advanced grammar class becomes a reality.

* * *

What Kind of Grammar Should We Teach in College?

Cornelia Paraskevas-Shepard
Department of English
Western Oregon State College
Monmouth, OR 97361

> "There is no point in teaching grammar if students do not understand it or, worse, if they detest it. Two primary goals of grammar teaching are for students to gain insight into the workings of the English language and to gain a love for it as well."[1]

> "In one of my classes, we were asked to review other students' papers. I was able to read the paper and see mistakes I wouldn't have seen before. The funny thing about it, I could even label the mistake and answer the question 'Why?'."

> "I understand what the rules I am applying are and I will never say to a student "just because"."[2]

Most of the students I teach at Western Oregon State College are education majors. Although a course in Basic Grammar is not a requirement for them but an elective, they choose to take it because they see the advantages of having a solid knowledge of grammar when they get ready to teach. Some of them have had a course in grammar while in high school and have developed certain ideas on what grammar should be. When they first come to class, they expect to have a course in prescriptive grammar, memorize rules and learn the do's and don'ts of "proper" English. They have been taught to define word classes based on meaning rather than form or function: the definition of a noun that they usually give is "the word that names place, person or thing". Most of them believe in a model of language development where everything is static and any change is corruption and deviance from the proper form of language. We often debate the use of the different cases of the relative pronoun, for example. They know the rule that specifies when whom should be used, although they themselves rarely use the accusative form in their speech; yet, they insist on preserving the distinction and teaching it to their students because, as they claim, maintaining the distinction is a sign of "good" English. Since these students will soon be teaching English in our schools, what is the best way to train them so that they can explain certain grammatical phenomena in English rather than say "just because that's the way English works?" What kind of grammar should we teach them so that they develop a clear understanding of how language works?

Before I begin any kind of grammatical analysis, I discuss the difference between descriptive and prescriptive grammar; this difference is not trivial but has implications on what we perceive grammar to be and how we teach it: in a prescriptive model, where language is a static entity, the role of the grammar teacher is to state what is proper and how forms should be; the rules of grammar given to students are often different from the rules they use in their own speech; grammar instruction, then, becomes a futile exercise removed from the students' linguistic experience. In a descriptive model, on the other hand, where language is an ever-changing entity, the teacher simply describes forms without judging them as being proper/educated English. Different forms used by students are equally acceptable, provided that they are systematic. Grammar, in this sense, is exploration of the students' own variety of language and not of an abstract prescriptive standard.

Once the distinction between the different types of grammar is made clear, we concentrate on defining word classes so that we have the basic tools to work with. Traditionally, word classes have been defined with respect to meaning rather than form or function. Using structuralist and transformational principles, we define word classes on the basis of form and then examine their function in a sentence. For example, instead of defining a noun as place, person or thing, students discuss the formal characteristics of this class that uniquely identify it and separate it from the other classes. For their definition, they use grammatical properties -- nouns have plural forms and possessive forms -- and co-occurrence properties -- nouns can be modified by an article or an adjective.[3] In this way, the students themselves define and separate the various classes rather than the teacher giving them notional definitions that they have to memorize. In addition, students realize that word classes are not illogical constructs that grammarians have created, but are categories with formal, definable characteristics. Learning how to define and distinguish classes gives them the necessary tools for analyzing language and makes grammar a discovery process rather than an abstract, ad hoc subject.

Having acquired the tools necessary for defining form, students are ready to examine the function of each word. This is an important part of the course, not only because they see how the same form can have different functions, but also because they must justify and explain their decisions. I believe that it is important to focus only on the most important functions of words. For example, I draw a distinction between direct objects and complements, but I do not discuss the further division of complements into predicate nouns and predicate adjectives. The distinction between objects and complements is important and must be clearly understood since it has further implications: the object becomes the subject of the passive, whereas the complement does not. On the other hand, distinguishing between predicate adjectives and predicate nouns is not crucial since this distinction does not have implications on other grammatical constructions.

While examining a particular construction, students must decide on its function and justify their decision. For example, they must decide whether a prepositional phrase functions adjectivally or adverbially depending on what it modifies. Justifying their decision takes the guesswork out of grammar; they consider the assignment of function as an exploration, a game, and the whole sentence as a puzzle to be solved. In this way, they "gain an insight" into the language and view grammar as a challenge instead of a burden.

Almost all the sentences used are their own; they bring in sentences from papers they are working on, sentence that have been marked incorrect by an instructor, or sentences they found in somebody else's writing. Using their own sentences for instructional purposes makes the teaching of grammar less abstract for them and relates it to their own experience; we analyze each sentence they bring in, not a sentence that came from a textbook, looking at the form and function of its most important parts. I also ask them to correct sentence-level errors that the writer might not be aware of. Correcting these errors gives valuable practice to the students, not only because each of them has a turn at identifying errors and correcting them, but also because he/she must explain to the rest of the class where the error lies and how to correct it. I stress the significance of explaining the error because it is important for them to know, once they become school teachers, how to explain to their own students their mistakes. The students themselves recognize that having a solid background in grammar enables them to explain errors; they consider explanations to be of utmost importance:

"I could even label the mistake and answer the question 'Why?'."

"I do want to be able to tell my students why a particular sentence is wrong so they don't grow up like me, knowing it's wrong but not knowing the reason."

Often, a few students will "revert" to their prescriptivism and claim that a particular construction is wrong "just because..." This is the point where we must discuss again what language is and how it works, with the ultimate goal of training them to enjoy the challenge of doing grammatical analysis rather than being intimidated by it and making them descriptivists rather than prescriptivists.

For the upper division grammar class, where students already have a solid background in grammar, focus is placed primarily on understanding and explaining current usage. For example, we discuss in detail what to do with constructions of the type "John and me went shopping." Some students consider such sentences unacceptable in both spoken and written English and do not attempt to understand how they came into existence. My goal is not to make them accept this usage but understand the reasons underlying it. Part of the user's unconscious knowledge of the language is the rule stating that the personal pronoun is in objective case when not in initial position or when conjoined with another noun; this underlying rule is revealed in the surface structure, in the constructions used. In other words, this error is not due to incompetence on the part of the user; rather, it is a surface manifestation of an underlying rule. This distinction between surface and underlying structure, used in Transformational Grammar, is relevant to the explanation of surface grammatical phenomena. It is important for these students to understand that errors in grammar reveal the user's underlying set of rules rather than inferior grammatical abilities.

One of the most important issues that is related to the above usage is the issue of non-standard usage and linguistic change. For example, I often hear people use the non-standard forms "I have saw" or "I have went." There are two ways of dealing with such usage: the first and least satisfactory one is to claim that such usage is absolutely wrong and, therefore, unacceptable. The second way is to understand the reasons responsible for such constructions: the past participle in these constructions is irregular and users of the language make it regular -- replace the past participle with the past tense form -- by analogy to the construction "I have talked" in which the past participle is identical to the past tense form. This does not mean that such constructions should be used in writing since writing, as we know, is more conservative than speaking and more resistant to change. Understanding the reasons for this usage, however, will enable the teacher to offer substantial help to the student instead of simply marking such constructions as wrong without offering an explanation beyond the typical one "that's the way it is done in English."

The grammar taught in schools is that of the standard dialect; students in upper division grammar classes must be aware that non-standard dialects also have grammars, rules that describe them. Certain rules are the same between the two dialects, but others are not. It is important to understand that the dialect used as standard achieved this status because of non-linguistic reasons and not because it is more logical or pure than the other dialects; by understanding this, students remove the prestige from the standard, become more tolerant of non-standard versions and attempt to describe them in terms of their differences from the standard. The grammar of the standard dialect, then, is used as a frame of reference for describing and explaining non-standard usage instead of being used as the absolute criterion for correctness. To achieve this goal, however, students must have a solid background in the grammar of the standard; then, they can understand the differences between the two dialects and offer help to those students who use non-standard dialects in their writing.

The common thread, then, between upper and lower division grammar classes is the emphasis on describing and explaining usage rather than prescribing correct usage. In the lower division classes, focus is placed on form and function while in the upper division classes, focus is placed on standard versus non-standard usage. I believe that this is the kind of grammar that future teachers should be taught: a descriptive set of rules that helps them understand and explain the form and function of constructions without offering judgements concerning the educational level of the user.

[1] Richard Veit, Discovering English Grammar, p. 261.

[2] Comments from students in a "Basic Grammar" class.

[3] Jeffrey P. Kaplan in English Grammar Principles and Facts (1989) uses these techniques in order to define the various parts of speech.

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Reviews of Current Grammar Texts

Robert Sirabian
Purdue University
West Lafayette, IN

Serving on the Handbook Selection Committee at Purdue University, I had the opportunity to review numerous paperback handbooks. For this review, I decided to choose four texts that I found to be interesting in approach and method. Before beginning my reviews of The Portable English Handbook, Practical English Handbook, Rules for Writers, and Review and Revise, it would be helpful, I believe, to briefly outline some criteria I had in mind as I examined these handbooks.

The value of students learning grammar is that they will be able to apply what they learn to their own writing. Working through countless exercises or learning grammar "rules" is of little value if students cannot determine the grammatical structure of their own essays and learn how to correct or modify them for more effective writing. Grammar handbooks that are valuable present grammar in a way that allows students to see grammar as part of the whole writing process. Currently, the most useful (user-friendly) handbooks are those dedicated to being handbooks; they do not try to be readers, rhetorics, or style manuals as well as handbooks. Most "handbooks" which try to cover writing and everything else a college composition class might consider usually do not achieve their comprehensive goal. Such all-encompassing texts offer a variety of information because they are attempting to be more marketable than texts with a specific content. Having a text which covers both writing and grammar certainly eliminates the need for teachers to require several texts and eases the student's financial burden, but very few texts currently on the market come close to balancing both concerns, especially when space is limited. The best handbooks concentrate on grammar and mechanics and on organization and paragraphing as they affect the structure of a paper. Students should go to readers or rhetorics to learn complete strategies for planning, drafting, and writing.

Features I considered when reviewing these handbooks were readability, depth of explanations and examples, and cost. A handbook will be useful only if a student can read and understand it. Organization and formatting are important here. Handbooks should be organized so that students can find specific problems or areas that they need to study or to review. Clear formatting helps information to stand out and helps a student mentally file concepts. Explanations should define error types and show strategies for correcting and avoiding errors, and examples should go beyond the obvious, for one complaint that students have when using handbooks is that they can never find an example of the problem that arises in their own writing. Many handbooks seem to give the "obvious" examples rather than more complex examples that appear in student writing. Finally, it is impossible not to consider the cost of education today. The handbooks reviewed are all paperbacks, which keeps educational costs down. Students are more likely to consider buying a handbook, even when it is not required, if the handbook is helpful and reasonably priced.

The Portable English Handbook (Herman, William. 3rd ed. Holt, Rinehart, Winston. 1986. Retail Price $12.95)

This handbook is designed to help students who need to know the fundamentals of basic grammar, and they can use it not only in the classroom but also on their own. This book is divided into two sections, both of which reinforce and refer to the other. Part One discusses the concepts of basic grammar (parts of speech and sentences). Students must have some knowledge of basic grammar so that they know common terms and principles. Without these, it is almost impossible to look up information in any handbook. Each section defines and illustrates different parts of speech and is followed by self-testing exercises. These can be useful for classroom exercises as well. References to Part Two are also given so that students can explore their own needs or interests further.

Part Two contains the handbook of grammar and mechanics, which illustrates and explores the principles reviewed in Part One. A main feature of this section is its alphabetical organization. Students can easily find terms which refer to the problems they encounter. Instead of having to figure out what subheading "fragment" falls under, they can simply look under "F" to find it. The letters of each section are printed in color on the outer edge of each page for quick reference. If a term is not listed under its own heading but its explained under another, then a reference will be given to the student. For example, a student looking up comma splice will be directed to see "comma rules."

Definitions and explanations given in this handbook are complete and detailed. Terms are first defined and then examples are used to illustrate concepts. These examples are varied and show different ways in which an error can appear. As in Part One, each section is followed by self-help exercises. Answers are given in the back of the text so that students can check their work and get immediate feedback. Items dealing with sentence structure (i.e. fragments, parallelism, modification) are especially useful, although mixed construction and predication problems are not addressed. There are also sections devoted to writing strategies and researching, which connect grammatical principles to the writing process as a whole. The index is functional, and formatting makes the text readable. Students will not find this handbook intimidating, and teachers can combine its use with their own concerns.

Practical English Handbook (Watkins, and Dillingham 8th ed. Houghton Mifflin. 1989. Retail Price $16.75)

This handbook may be best for students who already have a grasp of basic grammar. Its focus is more on examples of various grammatical errors and how to correct them than on defining error types and explaining what they are. One of the main strengths of this handbook is the amount of examples and the detail used to illustrate errors. Rather than using "obvious" examples, it shows students a variety of errors, which vary in complexity. Since student writing produces various types of errors with various degrees of complexity, this handbook will help students understand and correct problems which occur in "real" writing experiences.

The organization of this handbook is fairly standard. The first section explains basic grammar concepts (Parts of speech and sentences); the rest of the text is divided into the categories of sentence structure, punctuation, mechanics, and diction and usage, with the last sections covering literature and research. Subheadings make it easy for the students to find specific error types. The handbook offers complete coverage of error types, including those not always found in other handbooks, such as predication, mixed constructions, and faulty comparisons. It is much more useful for the student and the teacher to be able to pinpoint and define a specific problem or error rather than labeling it "awkward sentence structure." Numerous examples let the student see how these errors can be identified. Coverage is also good in areas like capitalization and hyphens, which are often covered too quickly in handbooks. The section on commas is also excellent. Sections on thinking and writing and paragraphing examine the writing process as a whole. Each section is followed by exercises allowing the student to review concepts.

The sections on business writing and literature are brief as the focus of this text is on grammar and mechanics, but they provide useful references for quick information. Advice is also included on how to avoid using sexist language. Although probably the best for students who have some knowledge about grammar, this handbook will not intimidate users who need to grasp basic concepts.

Rules for Writers: A Concise Handbook (Hacker, Diana. 2nd ed. St. Martin's. 1988. Retail Price $17.25)

This handbook approaches writing as a process, and in light of this, grammar is addressed as part of the writing process, mainly revising and editing. While the first four sections discuss the whole paper, paragraphs, sentences, and words, the next sections begin the grammar discussions. These sections are clearly marked and labeled, so students should not become confused once they realize how the text is organized.

Definitions of grammatical elements are complete and specific, but the number of examples given tend to be limited. The sections on sentence structure and commas are very good and give advice on how to correct errors using more than one strategy (correcting or rewriting). The difference between the section "Revising Sentences" and "Editing for Grammar" is that the former approaches grammar from the point of view of choices. In other words, during the writing process the student has choices or options as to how to construct sentences. The section addresses large ideas such as coordination and subordination. The latter approaches grammar in terms of editing after a choice has been made. This section looks at specific errors, such as fragments and pronoun agreement, and functions as a reference tool. Sections are followed by exercises, and answers are provided at the back of the handbook. Included are brief sections on the research paper and business writing which are generally helpful. Sexist language is also addressed.

This handbook can be used in the classroom by students on their own. By connecting grammar and mechanics to the writing process as a whole, this handbook makes them part of the whole writing experience and not just rules that have to be learned to please teachers.

Review and Revise (Martin, Marlene. McGraw-Hill. 1989. Retail Price $12.95)

If it is possible for a handbook to make grammar fun, then this one certainly comes close. It is unique in that it illustrates concepts using cartoons from The New Yorker and The Far Side, to name a few, which show how meaning is affected by different rhetorical situations. Students can laugh while they learn, and as a result, this handbook is very approachable. It is divided into two sections. The first one deals with the writing process; the second contains the handbook itself. Part One gives information on such items as prewriting, planning, and editing. Part Two is the handbook which offers the advantage of alphabetical organization, making it easy for students to find what they need to focus on in their own writing. Sections devoted to grammar define terms and offer examples to illustrate both the wrong and the correct usage.

While a section on fragments is helpful, a shortcoming on this text is the brevity of many sections. Also, more complex problems such as predication and mixed construction problems are missing. The handbook is intended to be compact and accessible and the author does not want to bog down students with complex terms or analysis, but student writing usually produces complex problems; therefore, addressing these concerns is most helpful to students.

This handbook would be an effective supplement for the classroom. If students used this handbook to gain an understanding of basic fundamentals, then teachers could add information as students progress. It would be most useful for students who need to grasp the fundamentals of grammar.

(One concluding note: All of the above mentioned handbooks are paperbacks, which makes them affordable for most students. They are also compact and easy to work through, which is important. Handbooks that are most useful are those which are easy to use and which students feel comfortable using. By supplementing a reader or rhetoric with a handbook, the student gets the most helpful and specific advice and the teacher has more options and flexibility when covering materials that students need.)

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Personal Editing Workbooks for Composition Students

Sally Joranko
John Carroll University
University Heights, Ohio

Waiter! There's an Apostrophe in My Tomatoes

The workbook each of my freshmen will author this Fall has evolved--let me use the present progressive--is still evolving from an ongoing dissatisfaction with the way error has been handled in the ten years I've been teaching.

About five years ago I started reading composition journals, and what I've read in the past few has made me feel guilty; with this project I realize I'm flying in the face of current attitudes to error and the teaching of grammar, attitudes that suggest attention paid to either is at best simply ineffective and at worst harmful to the health of our students' writing.

Specifically, proponents of applying reader-response literary theory to the reading of students' texts have undermined certainty that anyone knows what error is and suggest that if there is such a thing as error, it's in the eye of the reader, which is the message implied by Joseph M. Williams' "The Phenomenology of Error." And since it's impossible for any writer to second-guess every potential reader's ideosyncratic quirks, is he then relieved of the burden of worrying about error? At a time when literary theory is privileging the reader, in composition it's a writer's market. We teachers are being encouraged by composition specialists like Donald A. Daiker to replace the red ink in our pens with praise.

Furthermore, if, as Patrick Hartwell argues, teaching "school grammar" has no effect on writers who rely entirely on "Grammar I," that is, "unconscious grammar," we are spinning wheels if we persist (111). At the three Martha's Vineyard Summer Workshops I've attended, where I believe I have been exposed to state-of-the-art theory and pedagogy, the professors consistently criticize teaching grammar and error-hunting. This year all three teaching the Reading, Writing and Responding seminar recommended that *no* grammar be taught in schools, at *any* level.

All, however, insist that final products be proofread and cleaned up, and if the writers lack the skills to recognize their own errors and to correct them, these teachers tell their students to have someone else do it for them: Mom, Aunt Sue the English teacher, boy- or girlfriend, or of course the machine. At my university students use what I call dorm-tutors--R.A.'s or remarkably fallible English majors or "my roommate. He's good in English." They also rely on spell-check or the Thesaurus key, often with comical results.

In the past I have deplored this practice as crippling writers, who need to take charge of their own problems since in "the real world" of business they will not have the benefit of their dorm tutors (and relationships do break up). In their near future they must satisfy the expectations of other professors that they demonstrate competency in writing what our students call "academic." Most of their writing at John Carroll is transactional and, as Susan Wall and Glynda Hull found through their study of attitudes toward error, professors "reasonably expect their students to have mastered the basics" (279).

But even that justification based on practical considerations has been shot down trade-school mentality. John Clifford, one of the reader-response people, sees the opposition of the university versus "'the real world' [as] especially degrading and trivializing . . . [in] urging us to link our humanistic work to the practicality of business and industry" (696). Ronald Strickland suggests we adopt "new models of teaching" based on Marxist and feminist resistance to "the neoconservative and corporate-sector demand for an educational system that shapes students to fit the needs of a capitalist and patriarchal society (291).

I've had my consciousness raised and partly agree with those who distrust conventional methods like the traditional association of composition with grammar. In fact, my own experience led me early on to discard the *Harbrace* homework, quizzes, exams and exercises, which taught students how to *count* ("1, 2, 3, 4, 5, let's see, I'll be sixth, so I'd better figure out the answer to mine while they're answering theirs"), but not much about writing. It didn't take long, even while I was still a teaching graduate student, to realize that grammar out of context is pointless. "But *my* sentence isn't in the *Harbrace*," one student complained.

And I pitched the red pen long ago, along with the punitive grading for error my rigid trainer had taught me. (One of the by-products of reader-response theory is that it relieves you of some of that guilt. Thinking about my "agenda" as a reader of student texts, I saw that I could blame my eye for detail on the nuns back at St. Joseph's elementary school, who inculcated--or nurtured?--my nitpicking tendency.)

At least I hadn't lost that see-everything eye, I thought, until Williams "got" me with his game for grammarians. It's true: I don't read the same errors that my colleagues might. Nor can I any longer read the Harbrace as a fundamentalist. As Wall and Hull point out, the rules aren't all hard and fast; some are "negotiable" (287). Even some "seemingly universal standards are really specific to transactional prose" (285)--specific, that is, to the graded expository essays required in 111 and 112, but not necessarily to other kinds of writing.

So, just when I have gotten this workbook together, it seems anachronistic. An acquaintance (who edits copy for a public radio station) was astonished when she heard about it: "What? College freshmen still need help with grammar?" Current beliefs on too many fronts suggest the obvious conclusion and pedagogy: do nothing about error. Let it go and hope it'll right itself, or it will just cease to matter. Close your eyes at the grocery; resist the impulse to play Holden Caulfield and clean from the world all the offending "tomato's" misspelled with an apostrophe.

But, stubbornly, I can't wallow in relativism. Reading about reader-response theory raised my consciousness, but in turn I reexamined my conscience--or, as the reader-response people say, my "agenda." Although I've come far from my early training as an expert error-hunter, especially my attitude regarding the relationship of error to grading, I accept that doing something about error is important to me and, I believe, to my students. How they write, not just what they write, still matters. How can we extricate one from the other? A writer is crippled if he can't exploit his language to convey his ideas; as Ed Vavra says in "Teaching Grammar without the Grammar Books," the writer who can't control his language can't realize its potential. My students are crippled by their reliance on outside "fixers," to whom they relinquish control of their writing. English majors and machines are fallible. Nor can dorm tutors accompany graduates to the office.

There is a practical side to this: in "Bitespeak" John Powers reminds us that "Corporations spend hundreds of millions of dollars a year on remedial programs for employees who can't handle the written language. Career schools . . . find themselves hammering basic English skills into students who should have learned them in high school" (36). In their near future, students have to satisfy those department heads I surveyed last year, to whom how their students write is very important. Some of them were no doubt the ones who make bad-humored calls to our department chairman, demanding, "What the hell are you people teaching those kids?" I too deplore the view, fostered by some of those professors, of English departments as trade schools and of English composition as a grammar course. But as Peter Elbow points out in "Embracing Contraries in the Teaching Process," we are responsible not just to our students, but to society and our academic institutions as well. The outside world expects us to fulfill our responsibility to help "students understand that written language is governed by rules and conventions" (Wall and Hull 285), just, as I remind my students, they accept rules in other areas of their lives. How many yards does it take to make a first down?

Despite our disagreements with the anti-grammarians, we can salvage something from their ideas. Glynda Hull, one of the few who are doing something about error instead of criticizing attention given to it, incorporates reader-response theory, and her experience has led her to conclusions similar to mine. We need new "ways of viewing error" as well as "detecting and correcting" them (209). First we need to read students' errors from their perspective in order to understand how and why they happen. Then we need to teach them how to read as we do, to help them discover and correct or eliminate their errors (199). We need to rethink when and how to teach grammar--always in context. This workbook evolved from the need I felt to do something about my response to student texts.

Better yet, my students should do something about their writing problems. We now teach in student-centered classrooms. Students "own" their writing; they are in charge of it. And if we can accept that apostrophes are not going to fall out of tomato's without some work--that is, if we can accept the validity of asking students to work out their problems, then it seems to me that a write-your-own workbook is not an anachronism. As Donald Murray says, the text the student writes is the most important textbook for the course (125). The workbook is a place where students write and rewrite and think about what they have written, so it fosters revision and metacognition. It is, I hope, a place where they will learn, which is my only criterion for giving it full credit. Best of all, though I've kept grammatical jargon to a minimum in my explanations, it is a place where grammar can be learned in context, which is the only way that makes sense.

But to get to what Richard M. Coe calls the "Monday morning" stuff (21): the book is divided into two parts, the first (the student's work) being the most important. There are seven essay units, each consisting of an error log, a spelling worksheet and several other lined worksheets. The student is in charge of logging the errors marked on each returned essay. Hull also feels the student should track his own error patterns (222). My assistant and I will determine from their diagnostic essays which problems we think the writers should focus on; that is, we will mark only some errors. But at first we will mark every instance of a particular kind of error--agreement, for example. This is similar to what I did when I jettisoned the handbook exercises and reproduced "hit lists" of samples from the whole class' writing. Hull finds it helps individual writers to narrow the focus to one kind of error but to assemble multiple instances of it (211). Peggy Pavlision also found through a classroom study that "Personal error analysis, often concentrating upon only a few serious errors at a time, seems to yield the best results" (9). But so as not to impose our readings of his text, we will first ask the writer what errors he wants to work on. David Bartholomae is one of several who recommend "having students share in the process of investigating and interpreting the patterns of error in their writing" (316). After workshops get going, he will also have the input of his peer readers. Thus we will all collaborate on his agenda.

He is entirely responsible for the spelling worksheet. Following Thomas Friedman's recommendation in "Teaching Error, Nurturing Confusion," I ask students to rewrite the whole sentence, incorporating the correct spelling. Friedman believes the correction "takes" better in context.

The writer will use as many of the other worksheets as he needs, depending on the number of kinds of errors he makes. He will copy the problematic sentences, but he will need our help, at least for half the semester, in doing the worksheets, where together we will explore options for revising the sentences--that is, for exploring the potential of his language, as Ed Vavra puts it, or for considering "alternative constructions" (Hull 219). For example, I think students should know there's more than one way to skin a comma splice, and it doesn't always entail punctuation. I suggest strengthening the punctuation, then justifying the comma by adding a coordinator, but also eliminating the need for punctuation by making one of the potential sentences into less than a sentence.

Last year when the workbook was in a more rudimentary stage, I learned that it's not enough to explain the rules and then set students on their own, expecting them to understand and apply them. Students still misunderstood my translations of rules and conventions (a three-page handout replacing the arcane handbook code, the last remnant of the old method to go). I had asked them to write their own versions, as if they were going to teach them to their peers. As you can see from the sample, some were able to correct their errors even though they applied the wrong rules to them. For example, Mike wrote "Our cellar, at least to me, was spooky. The walls surrounded you as you walk down the narrow, creaky staircase." He identified the error as agreement, and corrected what was actually a shift in person by eliminating "at least to me." He also corrected the tense shift--"walk" to "walked"--without identifying it. Tim wrote "Miller goes on to say that losing the material things in life are not so bad because these things can be replaced." But his explanation was "The verbs in the sentence are not in agreement with each other. That losing, is past tense and, are not so bad is present tense." Nevertheless he corrected the verb to "losing . . . is."

While recognition and correcting are more important than knowing the jargon, I still will set aside classroom time during each essay unit to conference with students over their workbooks. Hull suggests that later in the semester students can work independently (we'll see!), and in fact she recommends it, since it's important that the student try to recognize his error patterns and name them--create his own jargon. This is similar to a technique Ben McClelland uses for his U. of Mississippi composition students, who create their own terms for grading criteria (Martha's Vineyard 1990). According to Hull, the teacher intervenes by highlighting problem parts of a draft but not identifying the errors (221), after which the student tries to identify the pattern. However, if we want to emphasize the writing process, we shouldn't introduce any of this until students understand the difference between revising and editing (221).

I ask the writer also to compare early logs and worksheets with later ones, to track areas where he seems to be running in place or taking one step backwards. Finally, he will compare them all before he writes his self-evaluation of what learning has taken place (my criterion for grading).

The second part of the book contains my explanations of some grammatical rules and conventions, and a short section on style. Rewriting the jargon was one of the hardest writing assignments I have ever attempted--a gruelling exercise in audience awareness that meant scrapping the cryptic symbols in favor of identifying phrases that were short but written in language the students could understand. This coincides with Hull's admonition that marginal and end comments "(should not) consist of elaborate explanations couched in grammatical jargon" (219). I have known for a long time that "comma splice," for example, only confuses students. They knew I didn't like that comma, so they took it out. Then I had of course to teach fused sentences. In the workbook I changed the terms to "weak punctuation" and "missing punctuation." Also I tried to avoid words that need defining; "independent clause" became "potential sentence." "Subordinate clause" or "phrase" became "less than a sentence." If it seems remarkable, as it did to the radio-station copy editor, that college freshmen need such simplistic language, all I can say is that most of them do.

Deciding what rules and conventions to explain, since I was departing somewhat from "systems of grammar" (Wall 263), also took much thought. This workbook was to be one of those "alternate error-classification schemes" Hull favors because it is based on student texts (cited Wall and Hull 264). I began with what I had compiled during ten years of error analysis, trying to understand why students typically make certain errors. Thanks to the reader-response theorists I realize, of course, that those certain errors are what bother me; other teachers would select some rules that I omitted and eliminate some I included. Bartholomae says part of the difficulty of classifying errors is that error analysis begins with "interpreting a text," that is, with the analyst's "assumptions about the writer's intention" (317). Thus I might label as "error" what I believe to be a deviation from the writer's intended text, which is of course also a matter of interpretation.

Less a matter of interpretation as style is punctuation. That the workbook would include explanations of punctuation conventions was a given; if the fragile college ego can admit to any confusion about rules, it will most likely be over punctuation. But for the other selections I had to guess which problems would annoy or obstruct communication for most readers, that is, which "the significant majority of careful readers notice and which they do not" (Hartwell 174). But my guesses weren't completely blind, since I had behind me ten years of observing student texts and at least five years of reading placement essays with other teachers as well as watching peers respond to writers, meaning that the problems I included were not in my eyes only. Many are the ones typically found in handbooks, though not labelled as such: case, agreement, syntax. Fragments, though, I consider "wrong punctuation" rather than mortal sins meriting their own chapter.

You might be wondering about the student who commits almost no sins, except for venial ones. I wondered too about offending such students' intellects, especially since the placement essays this summer indicate a crop of exceptionally skilled freshmen; the incredulous copy editor dogs me. It is hard to find the balance between expecting too much of freshmen and expecting too little. For those of whom we can expect more I included a section on style, since I've found that often such students shrewdly assess what teachers want and spit it back, which is exactly what we don't want. "Clone," I remind them, begins with C.

It's possible, of course, that one year we'll face a class that doesn't need to learn anything, and that year I'll retire with my workbook, buy a gross of black magic markers, and visit the produce departments of some grocery stores.

Sally Joranko
John Carroll University
University Hts., Ohio 44118
216-255-8252 (home)
397-4529 (office)

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Seeing as the Brain Sees: The COGNITIVE PROCESS OF INSTRUCTION (CPOI) Applied to GRAMMAR

Madlon T. Laster
Daniel Morgan Middle School
Winchester, Virginia
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For some years now, the quote most often heard by public school English teachers is the reference to research's demonstrating that teaching traditional grammar has no effect on improving the quality of writing. Some -- I might even say many -- took this as license to omit the teaching of grammar altogether; and in the face of the emphasis on process writing, this was not difficult. What grammatical rules seemed necessary were taught the natural way, as part of the writing process, when need arose. The approach fit neatly in with other trends in education: discovery, naturalistic writing, the workshop approach, developmental stages, and "Whole Language."

WHY I TEACH GRAMMAR

Anyone who has been an enthusiastic parent of a young child can tell you how providing many options within the child's environment doesn't mean the youngster will try them all. Games, puzzles, and toys may capture attention again and again, while art, craft and construction sets are completely ignored. Waiting for the natural writing situation to call for grammar instruction, or holding to the idea of a three-minute mini-lesson at the beginning of a writing workshop to take care of a grammar problem is leaving a lot to chance. Ideally, the natural way that we learned to speak our language is the natural way to teach it; yet we can all remember that, while we "internalized" the -ed ending for past tense verbs as we were toddlers learning to talk, we didn't realize we knew it, we didn't know what to call it, and if we applied it incorrectly to irregular verbs, it was up to someone else to put us straight.

As a gambler, I expect to lose. I always have. Therefore, I don't gamble. As a teacher, I don't leave anything to chance if I feel it is important enough for students to know. So I teach grammar. Why do I teach grammar? Not because I always have, or because I was taught grammar, though the reasons do have a personal bias. I like it. It fascinates me. I use it to check myself when writing or speaking. I've used it all my long, professional life. I was a "late-bloomer." The workbooks with Robin Hood on the front, that began with the third grade and changed color according to the grade level, didn't stick with me, and I had to teach myself enough grammar, as a high school freshman, to understand Beginning Latin case endings.I don't remember a sentence diagram until I arrived in college, and then it all fell into place, literally. I could see in a diagram of a sentence, the placement of the words, phrases and clauses, and I could build, visually, their relations on paper. It finally made sense. Grammar was a puzzle, a game; it made order out of the welter of words on the page, and I could find patterns in it. I am a visual learner.

I still approach the teaching of grammar as a game, and a little like a science, via analysis and structure. I want my students to have an awareness of their language, an understanding of the way it works, an appreciation for the strength and beauty it can create. English has multiple ways to say the same thing, as several rhetoricians have been pointing out for various reasons. "Language is power" through its ability to communicate, and for the clarity and precision of the ideas it can convey. And language is responsible for first impressions beyond a person's initial appearance.

Beyond all this, those students who realize the value of a foreign language to participate in our "global village" need an understanding of the grammar of their own tongue, before they can clearly understand and appreciate a second one. Goethe's remark, "He who does not know a foreign language cannot know his own," may be played in reverse.

Finally, I need a set of common terms with which to discuss published works and the students' own writings. "There's something missing here," may be an effective comment for mature students, and even for younger ones, but there are times when a precise, "Your dependent clause here 'needs a leg to stand on'," saves time and makes the point clearly.

So I teach grammar. But how to do it? For five years now I have not taught it the way, I would be willing to gamble (and this time I'd expect to win), those instructors of elementary students teach it, those who teach it at all: a vertical line between complete subject and predicate, underline the simple subject once, the predicate verb twice, and put the initial of the part of speech over each word. I teach it the way the mind works, the way the brain learns, in a brain-compatible way.

SOME ORIGINS of the COGNITIVE APPROACH

The Cognitive Process of Instruction (CPOI) is based on findings from the past thirty years of brain research and twenty years of a relatively new discipline, cognitive science. For the lay reader, Harvard Psychology of Art Professor Rudolf Arnheim pointed out, in his book Visual Thinking (U. of Cal. Press, Berkeley, 1969), that all perception is based on what is taken in through the senses, and that 85% of the information in the world is apprehended visually.

Jeremy M. Anglin published findings from his research to test whether language development in two to four year olds paralleled their cognitive development (Word, Object, and Conceptual Development, Norton, New York, 1977). He felt he had sound evidence of the inductive workings of the brain, the development of information networks by "intension" and "extension" of concepts. Based on sensory information from several specific examples, the brain stores a pattern, a generic model to be referred to in new situations. As new sensory information comes into the brain, it is sorted through and matched against what is there already. The brain will add to, correct, and change a stored pattern over time, a process called "concept construction." Bits of information related to stored concepts are associated with them, a weaker storage-and-retrieval system, but one that allows for infinite amounts of knowledge to be remembered. In Learning and Memory (Norton, New York, 1982), cognitive psychology researcher Donald Norman, explains the basic theory of information-processing, information networks, and the ways people remember "100 trillion bits of information."

We don't need to review physiology and chemistry, or even study brain research; we just need to recall early humans as they developed from living as animals, to gathering their food, and finally to hunting and herding with weapons and tools. Language was late in coming. Think of how infants grow. The senses are first to develop, then the motor skills for a sense of balance and space. Infants usually walk before they talk. If you like the outrageous, you could call my strategies for grammar instruction "The Cave-Man Approach," but that is gender-specific. At Austrolopithicus Academy, we perceive, then we attack, and finally we verbalize. Cognitive instruction is inductive teaching because it is brain-based.

Forget the right-brain, left-brain notions in popular periodicals of the early eighties; the brain's two hemispheres work as a team. Information comes in to both hemispheres simultaneously, they just process it differently for "the whole picture." For teaching there are, however, a few principles to remember, principles from cognitive science:

1. The brain sees whole things. It looks at the whole, then at the parts, and then goes back to the whole. If something is too simple, the brain tunes it out and doesn't bother. (So much for operant conditioning!)
2. The brain remembers the bizarre, the unusual. The repeated routine is merely recorded as another impulse layer along a familiar neuron pathway.
3. The brain notices colors and closed shapes, remembering them best.
4. And finally, the brain stores whole concepts as visual patterns to match to new information coming in.

These principles apply to any subject area. How do we simulate brain information processing in teaching grammar? How do we show English as a whole picture? It would be more accurate to ask, "How can we visually represent the English language?" If the brain stores visual patterns, we are less than efficient in instruction if we assume students will automatically create an appropriate and correct representation for each concept we teach. We need to supply visual representations of basic concepts and attach the language needed to comprehend and discuss them.

CPOI and GRAMMAR

What is English? What does it look like? What are its parts? English is made of words in phrases and clauses, but those words are frustrating when you try to spell them, because they come from so many other different languages. Linguists tell us English is 60 to 70% Latin and Greek roots and affixes, and then there's the rest of it, with words being added all the time through slang and technology. It is a living language with a long history. A column from a newspaper spotlighting the languages from which English has adopted words and terms provides many specific examples from which to generalize. Students add others from their own experience.

Recalling the Italian motor scooters of about thirty years ago, where through a funnel you filled the gallon gas tank and poured the oil into the same place, I represent the English language as a funnel into which are poured the main languages that contribute to it. These mix and come through in small (single words), medium (phrases), and large-sized (clauses) drops. Staging one side of a telephone conversation can be a concrete demonstration of this visual representation. Students draw and label the "visual" in their pattern notebooks. Beyond that, we begin looking at the thought-units, sentences or independent clauses, as one of the basic concepts of the subject of English grammar.

The CONCEPT of the SENTENCE

Developing the concept of the sentence is a process of construction across the grade levels, where the initial pattern grows through more and more sophisticated examples into a concept-model that truly represents its complexities. Pre-school and kindergarten teachers who insist on responses stated as complete sentences are suggesting the concept to young children. They can understand that complete sentences have to have a "name word" and an "action word," whether you say them or write them down. They can sort pictures that represent theses names or these actions. They can make up sentences using the pictures. They can read flash cards with name and action words and create more sentences. Language experiences like listening to stories, telling their own, composing group stories to read and possibly copy, all provide students with examples of the basic idea that a sentence has two main parts, subject and predicate (no matter what you call them).

What does a sentence look like? What shape does it have for these two main parts? Frame a sentence and you have a long rectangle which can be divided with a vertical line, something we've been doing to written sentences for generations, but this time there is a frame, an enclosed outline, a shape noticed and recalled more easily by the brain.

At this point I begin using two symbolic shapes to represent the name/noun word and the action/verb word or phrase. With primary and upper elementary students you can demonstrate the idea of words' doing different jobs by using "apple," in "eating an apple" or "baking an apple pie." It can be the thing you eat or tell you what kind of pie, yet it is the same word with the same spelling. With that brief comment, I tell my students that all 80,000 or more words in a dictionary will be identified for one of eight jobs, which we call the parts of speech. We rule-out, draw, and copy into their pattern books a chart [Figure 1] which gives all eight symbols. A poster of these

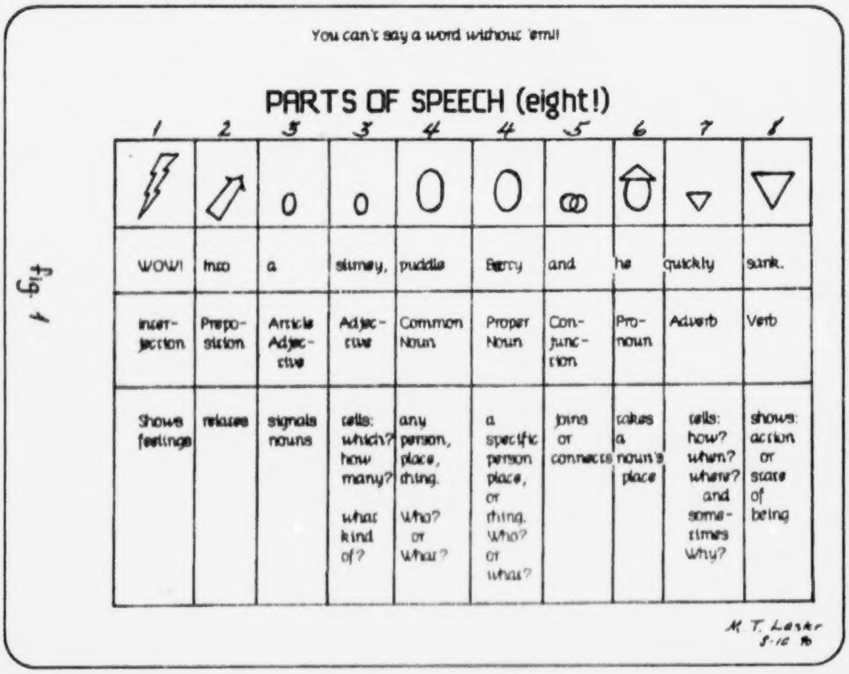


fig 1

You can't say a word without 'em!!

PARTS OF SPEECH (eight!)

1	2	3	3	4	4	5	6	7	8
WOW!	into	a	slimey,	puddle	Berry	and	he	quickly	sank.
Inter-jection	Prepo-sition	Article Adjec-tive	Adjec-tive	Common Noun	Proper Noun	Con-junc-tion	Pro-noun	Adverb	Verb
Shows feelings	relates	signals nouns	tells: which? how many? what kind of?	any person, place, thing. Who? or What?	a specific person place, or thing. Who? or what?	joins or connects	takes a noun's place	tells: how? when? where? and some-times Why?	shows: action or state of being

M. T. Laser

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

symbols hangs in the classroom for ready reference. Working with the concept of the simple sentence [Figure 2], I use only the noun and verb symbols. I begin using a blue overhead projector pen when I draw the noun-symbol over a noun, and I use a green pen to mark action verb symbols. Verbs of being I mark with a red pen, silently cueing students to the analogy with traffic lights. After a suitable period of time, I ask if they've noticed that I use two different colors to mark verbs and if they can tell why.

One of the frustrations of using published grammar, or English, textbooks is finding that the sentences used for practicing a concept are often more complicated than the ones used to introduce it. When presenting specific examples from which to abstract characteristics of a concept, it is important to have "clean examples." That often entails writing your own sets of sentences to be sure the concept you want to demonstrate is represented in each statement. The pattern must be obvious and consistent for students to "discover," or identify, at this initial step. I have found that creating situations around a cast of characters that are repeated in lessons throughout the school year is effective at the middle school level. This is especially true when the characters exhibit familiar interests and behavior. Students are outgrowing the overt egocentricity of the lower grades, where they included themselves and classmates as characters in their writings. By eighth grade, excerpts from their readings and samples from their own writings provide more mature examples and practice material.

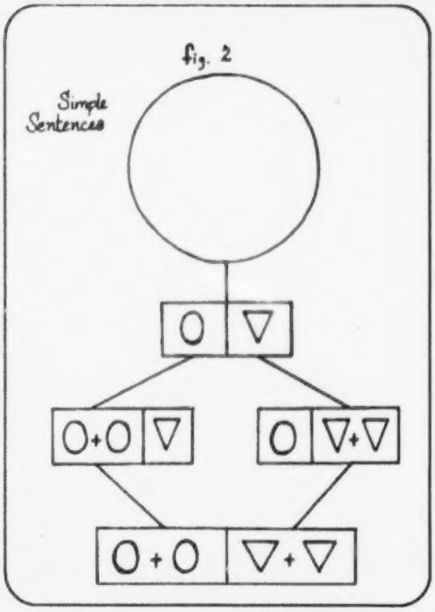


fig. 2

The brain-compatible CPOI, therefore, simulates the way information is processed in the mind by presenting examples of the concept, abstracting the traits or distinguishing characteristics, providing a visual representation of the concept with its language labels, and calling for a verbal description of the concept from each student, either oral or written. For grammar and other subject area concepts, I have students keep a pattern book with all the visuals and written descriptions. Cognitive science contrasts functional knowledge, or automatic without-thinking behavior, and formalized knowledge, that which can be articulated. Knowledge you can put into words is knowledge that is truly known. It can be transformed from the "declarative," factual knowledge, into "procedural," or strategy-knowledge, more terms from cognitive science.

DEVELOPING CONCEPT DIMENSIONS

Paralleling the brain's capacity for noting variations in a concept, its ability to sort through for a match and to associate related information, it is easy to introduce other forms of the sentence beyond the simple. With a set of example sentences, you can place the color-coded symbols for nouns (ovals like picture frames) and verbs (inverted triangles to resemble an enclosed V or the yield-sign near an interstate highway) as students find them, noting that these sentences seem to have more than one pair of name and actions words, of subjects with their predicate verbs. If you have planned your sentence examples carefully, students will note these longer sentences have parts that can be separated from the rest and stand alone. You are on your way to building the concept of clauses, independent and dependent, as well as simple, compound, and complex sentences -- even compound-complex, depending upon the maturity of the class [Figure 3].

At the sixth grade level, this is also a good place to think about how we complete sentences, once we are sure we can name what they are about and tell the action being done. I've found it effective to ask students to produce sentences of four, five, and six

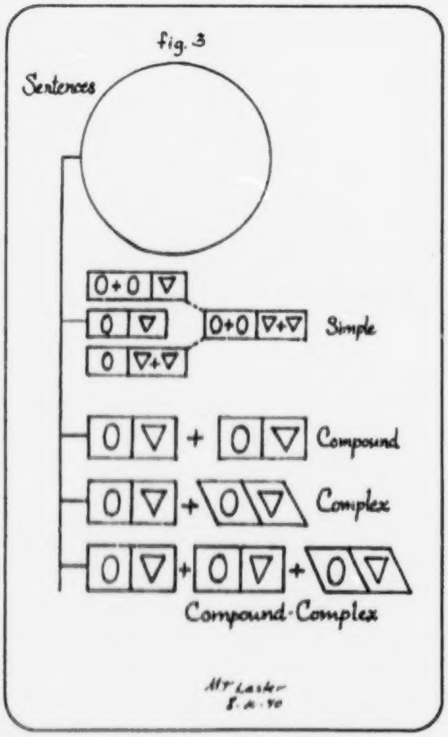
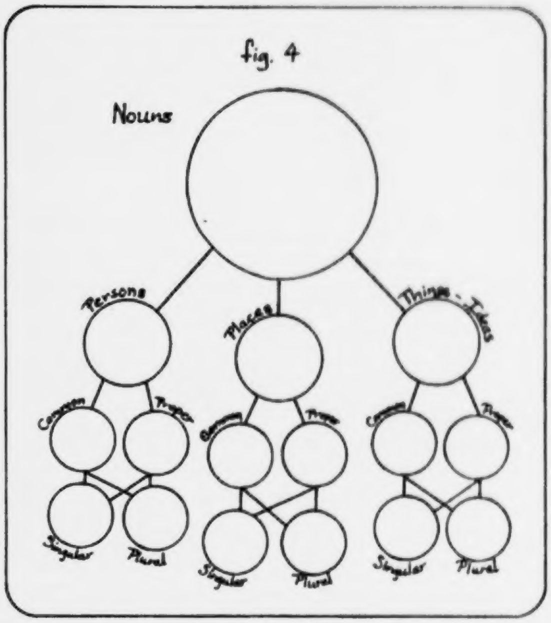


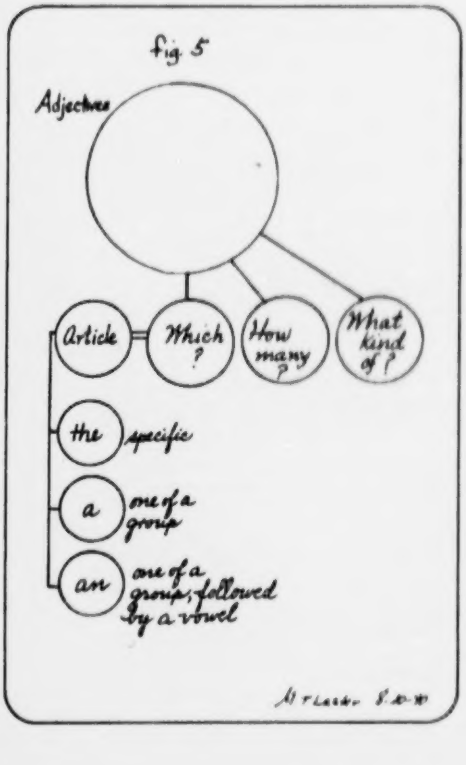
fig. 3



words. From these I cull the ones that demonstrate action verbs followed by adverbs, prepositional phrases, or the object complements, and also the being verb sentences with their prepositional phrases or subject complements. Recognizing the brain's response to colors, the teacher can arrange the selected sentences with action verbs first, followed by those with being verbs. This will underscore the green and red differentiation between action and being verbs with a vivid result. It is hard to overlook.

When a grammatical concept has been constructed through examples, a visual pattern, and a verbal description, it is important to practice identifying the concept in sentences the teacher provides, and then in sentences the students create for themselves and each other. But CPOI, in isolating the basic concepts of a knowledge system -- in this case, English grammar -- and then introducing related concepts to build associations or knowledge networks, sets up a situation in which the basic concept is continually reviewed and practiced. It builds on the earlier knowledge to understand the new, something we've always understood as a sort of sixth sense but now have brain learning and memory research to confirm. Even though you began with independent clauses as whole sentences and introduced the dependent clause to expand the sentence concept, when you move on to complements, as a teacher you can see that students have been working with nouns and verbs all along. When these parts of speech come up as separate concepts to study, a lot of practice in finding them will have been accomplished, and it will be easy to add other attributes.

The TRADITIONAL PARTS of SPEECH with CPOI



Having established verbal descriptions for simple sentences and three other kinds of sentences by structure, and having provided a set of symbols that distinguish quickly the eight parts of speech, I continue with these eight parts one at a time. Here a sorting frame is helpful for identifying and describing examples [Figure 4]. A large circle represents a word bank of "all the ________ in the English language," nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, or adverbs. Smaller circles connected to the larger visually guide sorting the category of "nouns," for example, into names of persons, places, and things or ideas/intangibles. Even more graduated circles can demonstrate that each of these three sub-classes can be described as common or proper, singular or plural.

To give another example of how a grammar knowledge-network develops: The noun that was identified as a basic part of a simple sentence is now studied for its other characteristics, including the ways it is used in a sentence. As students hunt nouns in example sentences, they find them in the subject and in the predicate, and they isolate them in prepositional phrases as well. A few questions will challenge the students to focus on what the nouns are doing in these different places. By middle school level, they will find that the subject and object complements they studied in sentences are included in the three of the five basic ways nouns may be used. Thus the verbal description of the noun concept grows to include what a noun does and where it is found, as well as what it is and how it looks (spelling variations).

An adjective frame or pattern allows sorting examples into articles, or those adjectives answering the time-honored test question of "which, what kind of, and how many?" An additional tier on the pattern could sort examples further into comparative and superlative degrees [Figure 5].

Taking up pronouns is most easily done by returning to the noun usage sentences and having students decide which nouns could be changed to another word to avoid repetition. Here several students usually recognize that pronouns are used the same way nouns are, and the teacher knows that the students are once again going over subjects and complements and objects of prepositions in sentence structure, although now with pronouns.

By the time the group is ready for verbs, they have been working with them all along to determine the complements or the usage of the nouns and pronouns. They've already been sorting them as action or being verbs and noting endings that mean auxiliary verbs have to be used, creating something called a "verb phrase." The sorting pattern for verbs can divide first into action and being, and then show that both kinds will have principal parts from which to suggest time and make verb phrases. I collect newspaper cartoons which can be used initially as specific examples to catch student interest. A "Miss Peach" cartoon showed Ira carrying a sign that said, "School stinks." The principal leaned out the window and asked how Ira could say that when school had not started yet, and Ira changed the sign to "School will stink." That strip serves well for introducing the idea of tenses and forms (principal parts, regular and irregular verbs). All the parts of speech can be developed as concepts with CPOI.

I hope that CPOI is fairly clear by now: determine the basic and related concepts students need to know; teach the whole concept through examples; provide a visual representation to copy and label; orally or in writing describe the concept verbally; and then practice with it in provided examples or student-generated examples. But one added word about the brain's penchant for the colorful and the bizarre.

The UNUSUAL CATCHES and STICKS

Some things are workhorse variety, bits and pieces that are needed to work with but relatively meaningless in and of themselves. Articles on information-processing usually mention short and long-term memory. The former is the immediate situation when the sensory information gets into the brain and it has to "use it or lose it." The brief, short-term storage supposedly holds only 5 to 9 bits of information, and unless the bits are matched or associated with the long-term, already stored knowledge, they will disappear. But clumping the bits together helps. I had a telephone number overseas, which consisted of six digits: 252590. I remembered it as, "Twenty-five, twenty-five, ninety." If clumping helps, so does giving the bits meaning by using mnemonic devices, those little memory tricks we have all employed to recall the planets in the solar system or how to spell "geography." I use songs and cheers in addition to my red-green-blue color-coding, when I teach grammar.

My teachers probably tried hard, but I never learned the being verbs as such, until I had taught fifteen years and moved to my present position. I was teaching next to a woman whose own English teacher had made her memorize the being verbs -- and also the fifteen common helping verbs. I'm not a list memorizer, but if I can relate things, it's not impossible. My students and I cheer, with arm movements and emphatic, rhythmical speech, "Be, been, being, is-am-are, was-were, RAH!" We do a similar upper body gyration for personal pronouns: "I, you, he, she, it, we, you, they, HEY!" At the sixth grade level it's successful, but at the seventh and eighth grade level students recall doing the cheers and joke about them, asserting, "I can still do it, too!" They usually proceed to prove it, so it is good for a laugh and a review. And then we sing!

When it comes to prepositional phrases, a bugbear if there ever was one for many upper-elementary and middle school students, the traditional Thanksgiving song, "Over the river, and through the woods, to grandmother's house we go," is a good mnemonic device. Just humming the melody of that opening line is enough of a reminder in future situations. The old repeating ditty, "Around the corner and under a tree, a Yankee soldier once said to me," also entertains, and serves the purpose. The symbols for the parts of speech make prepositional phrases particularly clear if you enclose them -- the preposition's arrow pointing back to its following oval for the object-noun -- in a cartouche-like frame. They stand out and can't be missed. Every now and then the Sunday cartoon, "Family Circle," traces the route of little Billy through the neighborhood, his room, or a shopping center, with plenty of prepositional phrases represented pictorially.

But a grand finale for any grammatical discussion using CPOI and brain information-processing principles would be another use of music: the idea of singing an alphabetical list of prepositions to the familiar patriotic song, "My Country, 'Tis of Thee." I picked up that idea while attending a conference in

Cambridge, Massachusetts, sponsored by the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development in April, 1990. The conference was entitled, "Brain Research: Implications for Instruction." Music's role in building atmosphere and relaxing the mind for a better learning state was much touted. A principal in my small group sharing the table mentioned that one of her teachers "sand the prepositions" with her fifth graders. I tried it and it works, if you are judicious about the prepositions you select.

WHO CONSTRUCTED the CONCEPT of CPOI?

Do I take the credit for applying brain research to my grammar instruction? Only the color-coding part, I confess. For years, a former colleague had color-coded things as an organizational technique. I tried color-coding verbs in 1983, after I had read Springer-Deutsch's Left Brain, Right Brain (Freeman, San Francisco, 1981). I knew someone would eventually tell beleaguered teachers how to teach in a way compatible with how the brain worked. CPOI is the brain-child of Dr. Joan Fulton of The Developmental Skills Institute at 5407 Patterson Avenue in Richmond, Virginia 23226. Dr. Fulton trains teachers and specialists earning graduate credit through Radford University. There is a consortium of school systems, mainly in Virginia, which have received consultation and training for faculty in their schools. The specialists in cognitive instruction are still relatively few, but we are an enthusiastic and dedicated group. It works.

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Challenging Misconceptions About Using One-to-One Tutorials To Teach Grammar/Style

Kim Ballard and Linda Haynes
English Department
Purdue University West Lafayette, IN

I want to begin this talk with a confession: until I saw "pedagogical grammar" listed in the call for proposals to this conference, I had never heard of the term. I still can only guess at the meaning by drawing on my knowledge of the definitions of each of the two words. But while I admit some unfamiliarity with one major conference term, I still believe that this presentation and my voice belong here. This belief, however, and my positive reaction to the call for proposals for this conference differs from the views of some of my colleagues. I am referring to some of my fellow graduate students who have been teaching college composition courses for a few years, but I think some of you may have gotten or know you could have gotten from some of your colleagues similar reactions to those I list here. Some of my friends dismissed the whole idea of grammar instruction as being boring and unchallenging. Others expressed amazement that a conference about teaching grammar could be held in the 1990s. They seem to think that questions about grammar instruction have been answered: time and two good strategies, peer editing groups and selective teacher comments on error patterns in rough drafts, will take care of this fairly minor area of writing instruction. Some of my friends also expressed concern over the restriction that no proposal calling for the elimination of grammar instruction would be accepted at this conference. I assumed that restriction reflected a desire to focus the conference discussion. I did not interpret it as a desire to repudiate completely the research of the past three decades or so, research which strongly suggests that teaching grammar as a skill gained through drill probably has little effect, no effect, or even detrimental effects on the development of students' writing abilities. I believe in the validity of much of that research and assumed that this conference was called not to dismiss it but to build on it. I assumed that a number of writing teachers wanted to get together to discuss the future of grammar instruction by exploring the problems with current approaches and offering new, not retrograde ones. In that spirit, I suggest that the interactive approach of one-to-one tutorials offers excellent possibilities for grammar instruction. However, I also want to caution those who are interested in this area that two current misconceptions about the role of grammar instruction in writing center pedagogy exist. They include: (1) that writing center pedagogy is skill-based and should use arhetorical grammar drills and (2) that writing center tutors are not responsible for grammar instruction, their job being to help students gain rhetorical competence, a task more complex than teaching grammar.

These two ironically different views and instruction based on them have something in common: they both clash with rhetorical approaches to writing instruction. Currently rhetorical writing instruction, based on classical rhetorical and on contemporary epistemic and transactional rhetorics, view writing as a dynamic among the writer, the audience, the language and/or reality, and the subject. The first misconception I mentioned promotes methods which atomize the act of writing, breaking up the complex dynamic into separate, discrete skills, often eliminating concerns for invention, purpose, audience, style, and process. The second misconception denies or devalues the importance of grammar, which could be called style, and so eliminates one aspect of the writing and meaning making process.

How did I decide, you might ask, that these misconceptions exists. Personal experience made me aware of them. During my first year or so as a tutor in Purdue's Writing Lab, I assumed that all those involved with writing centers operated under the same pedagogical theory which suggested that students could gain much from being encouraged by another person in a brief tutorial session or series of sessions focused on the student's text or writing concerns. During the past two years, I have come to realize that my assumption represented only one view of a writing center's role in writing instruction. A variety of views about what writing centers do and should do exist, including the two misconceptions I have targeted in this talk. The first misconception I listed, the view that writing center pedagogy is skill-based, seems to be most prevalent among our students, those we serve and those who choose not to drop by because they do not want more skill-based instruction. Administrators and classroom instructors with no writing center experience other than that they send us students to "fix" or students who are to get their papers fixed also tend to express the first view. But at two presentations at the Conference on College Composition and Communication this spring, I also heard a version of this view from a writing center director and a tutor who work in different writing centers.

The director expressed pride in her center because it has no human tutors, only computers and audiotapes. She has nearly fifty MacIntosh computers, so I understand her pride in the center's resources. (We have only one Mac.) But note; this center's computers are not networked; electronic conversations among users cannot be held, and as I have mentioned, this writing center has no human tutors. The work students do there must be individual, although I am sure students computing near each other asked one another for help or opinions. Students in this center are also encouraged to use computer tutorials and tapes for grammar instruction. Based on the kinds of problems that teachers have marked on their papers, students self-select the programs or tapes they want to use. Students who use this center have a great computer resource, but they have no access to the most important thing writing center pedagogy should offer—the opportunity to engage in a dialogue about one's own paper or writing concern, an opportunity which can include discussion of grammar.

Let me offer one other example of the misconception that writing center pedagogy should privilege grammar drill. Also at CCCC this spring I heard a tutor detail how her writing center verifies its effect on student improvement in writing skills. The tutor explained that for each student assigned to work on grammar in the center, records are kept of a diagnostic test score and an exit test score. The pedagogy or "treatment" offered at this writing center involves three phases which come directly out of experimental research methodology. The diagnostic test or pre-test guides a tutor's choice of which tapes and workbooks to assign each student. The students work with these tapes on an individual basis, although they can ask for help when needed and must periodically show the completed workbook exercises to a tutor. Also, students may discuss with a tutor any questions they have about the exercises, focusing on the grammar rules that govern the right answers to the exercises. When the students have completed the tapes and exercises they were assigned, they take an exit exam or post-test which is similar to the diagnostic exam. If the score is acceptable, they are allowed out of their obligation to the writing center, and the center's data bank adds more quantitative evidence of students' grammar acquisition success.

The pedagogy practiced in these two writing centers, I would argue, are efficient. Students using both centers get something out of their experiences, probably knowledge of mechanics which can be used when they take objective tests on mechanics or do worksheets. What is missing in both descriptions, however, is the effort to help the students understand how the mechanics they are studying contribute to or create meaning in a specific text, such as their own, and why some grammatical choices may be preferred, not necessarily required in various situations. In short, the approaches of these two writing centers is current-traditional; the emphasis is on the product, the features of grammar, and not the meaning or the creation of meaning. The approaches also suggest that one style exists, that the students using the centers should learn it so that they can be successful in school, and that learning such material is primarily an individual action. Having condemned such approaches, though, I want to move to the next misconception about teaching grammar through tutorials so that I can show that a shift in emphasis from the features of grammar to the dynamic meaning which grammar creates does not necessarily require tutors or teachers to ignore mechanical rules and the conventions of grammatical features.

The second misconception I mentioned is one I have heard from both undergraduate peer tutors and graduate tutors working in various writing centers. I assume that it may be more common than the first misconception. It involves an attitude toward grammar instruction which accepts that tutors should be concerned with all aspects of a rhetorical writing approach, with inventing and organizing ideas, with considering audience needs or expectations, and with considering the format and discourse community conventions, but somehow mechanics need not be a part of all the considering taking place. This view is certainly a confused one. Anyone professing a writing pedagogy grounded in a rhetorical approach is claiming to account for the dynamic among all aspects of the rhetorical situation—writer, audience, language and/or reality and subject. A tutor or teacher cannot simply choose to ignore the role of language and style in this approach. However, when a tutor is helping a student during a tutorial, she may find that while the student has a comma or tense problem, he also has nothing to say, and that particular nothing is poorly organized and lacks either an implied or stated thesis. In this fairly common writing center situation, the tutor is often limited to thirty minutes, so to help the student, the tutor's priority should be the need to explore the topic so that the student will learn the power of developing or gathering ideas which can receive some sort of organizational attention, including the possibility of developing some implied or stated thesis. The tutor also does not want to add to the student's feeling of being overwhelmed by the demands of the writing process and assignment. She can hardly say, "Gosh! Not only do you have nothing to say and no organization, you also obviously know nothing about commas and tense!" Yet, I would argue that the student in this tutorial needs in addition to the tutor's immediate help some other message from the her. The message should include at least the idea that successful writers have learned to use various writing strategies and that this student can also learn those strategies, especially if he comes back for more help. Should the student return with an improved version of the paper, one that has some sense of a thesis and some organization, the tutor might then begin to consider the mechanical error patterns and offer discussion of the causes of those errors and ways to avoid or correct them in the current text and future papers. The tutor and student would obviously be participating in "grammar instruction" in this exchange, and I would hope that this instruction begins with some questions about what choices the student made that lead to the errors and why the student made those choices. The tutor's response to the student's answers to these questions could include an appropriate discussion of the rules that were violated and strategies for dealing with or avoiding such trespasses in the future. At this point I could even see a tutor perhaps suggesting some tape or workbook exercise which she feels could reinforce the tutorial discussion. The difference between such work in this tutorial and the use of tapes and exercises in the previous writing center descriptions I mentioned is that the work in this latter situation is being suggested as reinforcement only after the student has seen how an understanding of mechanics can help him express what he wants or needs to say in a particular context. And this student has shown his own work to a tutor, so his questions can be answered in reference to his own writing. Such grammar instruction does not offer a system of rules which include a variety of exceptions that should be memorized. One could say that this last tutorial approach promotes grammar knowledge and skill as a system of strategies for meaning making. In certain cases, such as when "i-t-'-s" stands for "it is" rather than for the possessive form for "it," the strategy of using appostrophes to indicate possession give way to the strategy of using appostrophes to indicate a deleted letter. This explanation is valid, I think; it introduces reasoning not just memorization into the student's conception of grammar; and it shows that our language is dynamic.

I am sure that my time is almost up, so I will offer only one more point. It relates, I think, both to writing center pedagogy and to the purpose I have assumed motivated this conference—the desire to critique current grammar pedagogy. I suggest that an interesting parallel can be drawn between an important claim previous composition researchers make and the two misconceptions of writing center pedagogy I discussed. Previous researchers who have traced the history of invention, one aspect of rhetorical writing instruction, have suggested that skewed versions of the writing act resulted when invention was taught through a rule-goverened, managerial approach or when it was devalued or eliminated from the meaning making process. Skewed versions of the writing process also result from attempts to devalue or eliminate grammar and style concerns from writing center pedagogy and from attempts to teach grammar and style through methods that present grammar as a rule-goverened system of apparently atomistic features. Either of these approaches to grammar instruction in writing centers prevents tutors from understanding the richness and complexity of grammar and writing acts, and they may keep students from learning strategies for dealing with all aspects of writing.

Thank you for your patience during this talk. I would appreciate some questions about, disagreement with, or expansion of the ideas I have offered you.

Grammar Competency as Essential Background for English as a Second Language Students Entering Professional Discourse Communities

Linda Yost
Purdue University

Esl students who understand how to use grammar conventions within the context of their written discourse can create texts that meet the expectations of native English speakers in general, or at least the expectations of English teachers. However, Esl students will not always be writing for English teachers. Some students will remain in the United States after graduation working in a field or company that requires them to communicate with native speakers of English within the context of a stream of ongoing communication. Some students will enter graduate school and begin communicating with other professionals in their areas of specialization and try to enter the discussion occurring in professional journals. To really learn how to adapt their writing to a variety of situations and native English-speaking audiences, Esl students need to understand that audience expectations influence what grammar conventions are appropriate. So culture must be taught to international students. Without it, how would they know the expectations of native American English speakers or what is considered appropriate among special groups of English speakers? Many researchers in second language learning stress the need for cultural knowledge to accompany language learning. In the composition classroom, Esl students can acquire cultural knowledge and grammar competency when they are introduced to the concept of discourse communities.

One way to understand culture, which makes teaching it easier, is to see it in the terms of social constructionists to whom reality and texts are community-generated (Bruffee 1986). The culture, or social framework, within which Esl students will produce written discourse can be seen as discourse communities. Porter describes a discourse community as "a group of individuals bound by a common interest who communicate through approved channels and whose discourse is regulated" (38-39). Discourse communities are groups such as teaching assistants in Purdue's English Department or employees of the local McDonalds. These communities, according to Bizzell, are "accustomed to modifying each other's reasoning and language in certain ways. Eventually these familiar ways achieve the status of conventions that bind a group in a discourse community..." (214). The word "conventions" includes, among other things, grammar conventions. I include among grammar conventions such things as syntax, punctuation, usage, and stylistic considerations (i.e., use of first person and active versus passive voice). In addition to grammar conventions, Porter says that communities have particular areas of interest, rules for evidence and validity, and qualifications for individuals who want to participate in the discussion occurring among communities' members (1986). Members of communities can be identified by their use of appropriate conventions. These conventions can bind some people into a community and exclude others. In other words, knowing and using the conventions can ba an individual's way of gaining membership. So learning about communities and their conventions can help Esl students enter discourse communities, especially professional ones.

At this point, I will suggest three pedagogical methods for helping Esl students learn about discourse communities and their conventions. The first method involves having students examine texts produced by different discourse communities. Bruffee claims that texts are "community-generated and community-maintained linguistic entities...that define or constitute the communities that generate them..." (774). Discussion of texts in the classroom can help students see how different communities define themselves in their writings. I usually begin the class discussion of texts in my freshman-level Esl composition courses by asking students to name American magazines they have read. Surprisingly, or maybe not so surprisingly, many males in my classes seem to be most familiar with Time and Playboy. Most females seem to be familiar with Vogue or Sixteen. Then, I ask them to identify differences between the magazines they name and explain what those differences tell them about the interests and expectations of the magazines' readers. This type of discussion can get students thinking of how people can be united by common interests and how a text can reflect the interests of a particular group.

I provide students with copies of articles, essays, or letters from different national publications and lead them to examine and discuss the conventions or particular mediums, such as the differences between articles and letters, and grammar conventions at the sentence level. How effective this method is depends on the students' level of proficiency in English. Obviously, students who have basic problems reading English and no fundamental knowledge of grammar are not going to prosper very much by struggling to read these texts. The students who will benefit most from this exercise usually are ones with good reading skills and a good, basic understanding of English grammar.

After looking at national publications, students can look at texts closer to home, ones produced by discourse communities they could possibly write for while taking the composition class. Esl students on a college campus could examine the campus newspaper, flyers and letters produced by various campus organizations, and papers produced by students in other classes. When students have understood the concept of discourse communities and their various conventions, they can be asked to join the discussion occurring in one community by writing for one or more of its members. They could write a guest editorial for the campus paper or a letter to its editor. They could produce a brochure or flyer for a campus organization. They could write a letter to their American roommates.

Esl graduate students, especially those in the sciences, may already be immersed in a professional discourse community related to their area of research. In collaboration with professors or other graduate students, they may have already published articles in professional journals. Students at this level can bring in for class discussion their own articles and others addressed to the professional communities they want to enter. By discussing with other students how they have researched and written for publication, students can gain a deeper understanding of their own discourse communities. Their discussions can include the differences between documentation styles, presentation of research methodology, use of passive versus active voice, and the use of jargon. Since Esl graduate students compete with native English speakers for research and publication opportunities in their specializations, they need to have a command of their communities' conventions.

The second pedagogical method is the teacher/student conference. I hold conferences after the drafting of each paper to reinforce and clarify the ideas discussed in class and to help students with individual grammar concerns. These conferences offer opportunities to discuss within the context of each paper how students can adapt the conventions of discourse communities to suit their particular situations. I also discuss with individuals how to recognize and correct their grammar mistakes.

During conferences, students will describe the interests and expectations of members of the discourse communities they are trying to address. They also will explain what community conventions they have used in their papers and discuss how these conventions are meaningful to members of their communities. If it appears that students do not know enough about their communities, they must find a member to interview informally before they can revise their drafts. Undergraduates writing to campus discourse communities can find a member to talk to easily by making some phone calls or visiting the right office. Graduate students, who may be writing for professional communities off the campus, can examine more of the communities' texts and question their professors.

The third pedagogical method involves setting up peer response groups in class so that students can give each other advice during the revision stage of their writing assignments. When possible, I group together three or four students who are writing to the same discourse community and show them how to examine each other's drafts. Their purpose, which they need to understand, is to help each other adapt the conventions of their community to their papers. They must share information about the community and give advice for revision. I will just throw in a word of caution here. Since students must help each other eliminate grammatical errors from their drafts, groups should contain at least two people with a good understanding of general grammar rules. Putting together three or four people who have a poor understanding is a little like letting the blind lead the blind.

This view of writing and culture assumes that students write for others within the context of, for example, a class, company, or body of professionals. In part, all conventions, which include grammar rules and usage, can be seen as embodying a range of choices. When students write, they need to understand that they must make choices, choices such as which documentation style to use, which verb tense, or which medium. The correct choices are the ones that members of a particular community expect to see in the written discourse flowing in their stream of communication. Since Esl students who remain in the United States will need to communicate within the context of some community or communities foreign to them, they can begin preparing to gain entrance by learning about how group expectations regulate conventions. So grammar competency can include the ability to use basic English grammar correctly, plus the ability to make the right choices, seeing and using the particular conventions of a community in order to establish membership in it.

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Blue-Jay Grammar: Letting Students In

Jeanie Murphy
Pierce College
Puyallup, WA 98374

Remember Mark Twain's "Baker's Blue-Jay Yarn"? Jim Baker, after asserting matter of factly that "Animals talk to each other, of course," tells how blue-jays use language:

> ...mind you, whatever a blue-jay feels, he can put into language. And no mere commonplace language, either, but rattling out-and-out book talk—and bristling with metaphor, too—just bristling! And as for command of language—why *you* never see a blue-jay get stuck for a word. No man ever did. They just boil out of him! And another thing: I've noticed a good deal, and there's no bird, or cow, or anything that uses as good grammar as a blue-jay. You may say a cat uses good grammar. Well, a cat does—but you let a cat get excited, once; you let a cat get to pulling fur with another cat on a shed, nights, and you'll hear grammar that will give you the lockjaw. Ignorant people think it's the *noise* which fighting cats make that is so aggravating, but it ain't so; it's the sickening grammar they use. Now I've never heard a jay use bad grammar but very seldom; and when they do, they are as ashamed as a human; they shut right down and leave (Twain 144).

We English teachers would like to think of ourselves as blue-jays, I suppose, and we would like our students to find such a command of language. But often, when confronted with the endless stacks of badly written papers, we composition instructors might welcome a cat fight! So many problems—what are we to do with them all? Perhaps, we can start with what has traditionally been called "grammar," that strange, mind-boggling assortment of rules that comes in shiny little handbooks full of bright red commandments.

Like anything else, grammar can be taught badly. But I have found that it is grammar that often provides an entry point into the ambiguous, complex world of writing, particularly for the developmental student or uneasy freshman at the community college.

The developmental student at our college is classified as anyone who, upon taking a placement test that checks sentence level skills, is considered "below college level." The range is extreme. Not all the developmental writers I encounter have sentence level (grammar) problems, but most do, and even standard freshman composition students are crippled by having no way of talking about language, no metalanguage. They, as well as the "developmental" students tend to feel powerless over their writing, afraid to change it, afraid even to put any down on paper. Robert Frost said that a sentence is a string of sounds (and not cat fight sounds either). We all have noticed, however, that many of our students, particularly developmental ones, don't "hear" their own writing. That is, they often cannot instinctively "know" a piece of writing is "correct" or "incorrect." Somewhere along the line, they have missed that first and most natural acquaintance with the language. They don't read, no one read to them as children, and formal English is something mysterious and exclusive. For them, grammar may be the most accessible entry point into the mysteries of formal English.

GRAMMAR AS AN ENTRY POINT

The concept of *entry point* is one I've taken from technical writing and editing. In a technical document, entry points are things that help the reader dive into the text at hand and find what he or she needs. Entry points can include tabs, indices, icons, headers, footers, whatever is needed. (The current excitement over hypertext, for example, is simply about a new method of giving users entry points called "hot spots" into information stored on disk.) The assumption underlying the use of these devices is that few readers plan to read a technical document all the way through from beginning to end. Instead, they are going to jump around and try to find just the information they need for their particular application.

In the same way, I think we have to assume that students are going to jump into writing in many different ways. A teacher, as a disseminator of information, faces a task similar to that of a technical writer. Both the teacher and technical writer do a good deal of worrying about just what entry points will work. Technical (and other) writers worry about audience and plan their entry points accordingly. Teachers, of course, worry about students. And teachers of composition in the community college worry particularly about developmental students, whom we see more of every year. How can we initiate them into the community of writers and readers?

Anyone who has served time in a workplace where writing simply has to be produced (and no one particularly cares how, just when), knows that writers quickly learn very practical techniques that are too seldom taught in the classroom. The typical technical writing department has two different jobs that reveal two processes at work in producing any sort of document: writing and editing.[1] I'm still not convinced that we really teach students much about the actual writing or creation of a document. It's more a question of making a way for it—thus, the process techniques. And while we're writing, most of us have noticed that we have to keep the "editor" or critic in us at bay while we are attempting to produce. At the same time, it is usually fatal to produce without a critical reading or "edit." And it is here that we teachers can help the student. If grammar is presented to students as something to help them in their editing and revision, then it can become a tool, an aid, and the editor becomes a friend rather than a looming monster that paralyzes any creative process.

STUDENTS WHO NEED OR WANT GRAMMAR

Acknowledging all the risks of generalization, we can say that we have at least noted that the candidate for developmental composition at the community college is often intolerant of ambiguities and wants things spelled out in black and white. In the terminology of William Perry, the student is in Position 1—Basic Duality:

> The student sees the world in polar terms of we-right-good vs. other-wrong-bad. Right Answers for everything exist in the Absolute, known to Authority, whose role is to mediate (teach) them. Knowledge and goodness are perceived as quantitative accretions of discrete rightnesses to be collected by hard work and obedience (paradigm: a spelling test) (Hays 482).

Consider then, the reaction of such a student to a strict process approach in writing, the sort that tells students that they need to simply experience the process of writing and problems involving sentence structure will naturally straighten themselves out. There may be some initial delight, some freeing of inhibitions, some feeling of accomplishment. But there may also be a vague sense of unease. When, these students wonder, are they going to get to the things that really count? They want to be able to go out and get jobs and write "correctly." Or they want to go on to a four-year college and write "good" (i.e. correct) sentences.

The instructor notes a subtle (or even not so subtle) resistance building. Here we are, trying to free these people from the tyranny of rules and Miss Grundys, but these students seem obsessed with nit picky issues of spelling and comma placement. How can a teacher turn their minds to higher things?

The answer, of course, as in most things, is to start with what students know, understand, accept, and then move on to unknown territory. It's dangerous and even silly to assume that everyone in your class is a Perry stage 1 or stage 6 or whatever method of categorization you choose. So, naturally, the intelligent teacher of composition will use many different methods (or entry points) to help out a class full of individuals: readings, journals, formal papers, and yes, grammar exercises, preferably using their own writing.

For the student at Perry's first stage, the student to whom writing equals *grammar*, these exercises, if treated as an opportunity to learn rather than humiliate, provide as black and white an entry point as they will ever find. But they are only entry points.

PEDAGOGIC GRAMMAR AS AN EDITING TOOL

A pedagogic grammar should be as brief as you can make it and serve students as an editing tool, a set of standards they can learn to reference and apply to their own work. I, like most other teachers, am constantly refining my own version of this for various classes. This kind of grammar is a "functional grammar," or what Professor Kolln calls "rhetorical grammar." Although, of course, we know that "grammar" *per se* applies to the rules may be used to create sentences, I loosely define it in my classes as the rules plus such fairly black and white issues as spelling and punctuation. And you can start with even less thorny issues. I often begin with the most black and white aspects of formal papers. I start with format: what kind of paper, what kind of ink, what kind of heading.

(Remember, too, that along with all this, students are also reading and responding, writing journals, and just getting comfortable with putting pen to paper. Many different acorns are getting dropped down in there. This contrast helps emphasize the distinction between "formal" or "prepared" writing, and prewriting, drafts, scribbles, and inspired snatches. I give students credit for these informal writings and only write comments that are a sort of chit chat, a response to their responses. They see that I need not respond to their writing with grades and red pen.

But back to format. Format, I explain, is an easy 25 points out of 100 for them. Anyone can follow format guidelines. Of course, the ploy behind the emphasis is to get them used to the idea of checking their work in the most concrete way possible, a concept that often seems dismayingly foreign to them. (Many colleagues find it foreign as well to their teaching styles—a trivial emphasis on non essentials.) But I don't think we have to present these things as if they are divine principles. We simply present them as one more game rule for success. A simple format is often a good standard for getting students used to logical, practical editing practices. It's certainly the least ambiguous, the most easily attainable. The point isn't to drag students down to the level of the trivial but to help them develop habits of attention.

STYLE GUIDES

When the first formal paragraph or essay is due, I hand out something I call a Style Guide. It isn't really a style guide in the sense of a company manual or handbook, but a sheet that explains how I grade their formal papers. This makes a teacher accountable to students, only fair when you consider what they risk with you. Again, this comes from my technical editing experience, in which I could not wield grades as a threat. I had to be able to explain, justify, or research any edit change I made, often in the face of some contention. It is a good thing to attempt to define your own standards, even if you can never completely do so. (One of the worst writing tasks I ever encountered was completely revising a company style guide.)

As a former Technical Writer and Editor, I can't imagine having functioned without a style guide, that strange testament of Byzantine company policies, illogical acronyms, spellings, and secret memoranda from Marketing. To our students, the ways of formal English seem just as challenging as Technospeak, if not worse. So, as soon as possible, I want them to get used to finding the information they need. Once they have gotten used to the format guidelines on my sheet, I get them started with a handbook and talk about the second area of concern, grammar. You can lead up to this, if you wish, by starting with dictionaries, having them, in class, use checklists for format and then for spelling. But as soon as possible, you want to get them into a handbook.

Whichever handbook you use, students will find it boring and intimidating. The job ahead is to make it accessible. We start with terminology, with sentences from their papers, and with sentences they create to fit various patterns. But most of all, the teacher must clearly show how a style guide/handbook can directly help a student. One thing I do is have proofing and editing sessions the day the papers are to be handed in. I know this is a fairly common practice. But for developmental students, it needs to be made as concrete and as specific as possible, or they often become frustrated. Once students have learned how to use handbooks to look things up, they find that the corrections made in these sessions usually raise paper grades by at least one letter. Students quickly realize that it pays to learn how to apply rules they need, rules that are not instinctive for them.

Obviously, it will take most students some time to accurately apply comma rules, but why not start with a checklist of format and spelling? You can build this checklist, eventually refining it by working with each student individually on their own personal checklist. Grammar is no longer an abstract threat, but a concrete back up system for their own specific applications.

It is worth adding that one can emphasize the difference between sentence editing and deeper revision by having earlier revision sessions with rough drafts. In these sessions we talk about content and style issues. Thus, students do not feel that it's just incorrect grammar that will "give you the lockjaw."

The response I have received from students is interesting. If we are using something like *Harbrace*, they hate it at first, but somewhere in the middle of the term, I see them clutching it like a Bible. They realize that it is a tool, something they can actually use and apply to their own work. They say things like this:

> "Harbrace was (yawn) but very useful. It is definitely a keeper."
>
> "I enjoyed the reader and Harbrace will be a companion forever" (Student)

The Harbrace Handbook, by the way, remains my favorite among the pack, but any well put together handbook will do. I've found that if you sacrifice complexity or attempt to be cute, students still recognize the bitter pill underneath but no longer have as complete or clear information. The ones that claim to bypass all grammar jargon are particularly malignant, since they then proceed to substitute some sort of particularly cutesy jargon that no one is familiar with, not even you. I use traditional grammar terminology for the most part simply because it's what most people have heard somewhere at sometime.

In my remedial classes, I also provide a distillation of a few basic concepts to supplement the forbidding red commands of *Harbrace*. My own packet, called "Survival Grammar" grew out of an afternoon seminar I gave for the Society for Technical Communication. An astonishing number of people turned up that sunny Saturday for an "overview" of grammar, traditional grammar. The one common denominator was insecurity.

"Survival Grammar" is simply an outline of the basics I need students to know, so they will understand what I and *Harbrace* and their style guide are talking about. I have students fill in the information so that they can, essentially, create their own style guide. They seem to like it. It includes the eight parts of speech, three basic sentence (clause) patterns, basic "sentence constituents" (subjects, verbs, objects), clauses, some phrases, and sentence types. I am still experimenting with what exactly needs to be included. I've learned to drop a great deal.

The other tool I've found particularly helpful is a very straightforward, open book quiz once a week. It is important that the quiz be open book. This avoids tiresome memorization of terms; instead, students use their style guide materials the way a real editor does. All the issues on the quizzes are grammatical, fairly cut and dried. Admittedly, "real" writing is not like this, but these quizzes are just entry points. They don't claim to be anything more. In them, I encourage students to create goofy (but "correct") sentences, following different patterns, and I give them some goofy (yet grammatically correct) examples. I've also found that if you can get students to generate a "wrong" form on demand, a comma splice, for example, they will finally see what that is. And they all love the idea of doing something "wrong."

Quizzes are graded, but the grades don't count; instead, the final at the end of the term counts as a percentage of the final course grade. The final exam is exactly like the quizzes except longer. (I also included a requirement that they take the quizzes—for each one missed I deduct five points from their final exam grade. That reduces the temptation to skip.) Students can practice test taking in a fairly comfortable way, and I do not have to be a policeman, since the quiz grades don't count anyway. Students know that the quizzes are to help them get ready for the final rather than penalize them. They repeatedly tell me how helpful this setup is for them. Are they doing "real writing?" No. But they're finding their own way in.

DESCENT INTO TRIVIALITY?

Now as most of you know, too much emphasis on grammar and editing leads to writer paralysis—hyperediting, freezing up, general paranoia. I see my colleagues worrying that students will become obsessed with all the wrong things. To counter this, as I have said, I encourage journals, prewriting, rough drafts, reading assignments, all the standard components of a composition course. I also let students rewrite some of their papers for higher grades. Teachers find their own ways to soothe or distract the overly nitpicky, grammar-obsessed student. Eventually, students will not just frantically try to find a rule that *always* works, but instead discover that they can use grammar to control language rather than feel overwhelmed by it. But, as I said earlier, of course you can use grammar to intimidate, discourage, and trivialize. I'm sure you can use many things that way if this is what you wish to achieve. I trust I am not hopelessly idealistic when I assume that most composition instructors are not trying to do this.

And yet, if you mention that you teach grammar, colleagues tend to edge away and look pained. Often, I'm invited to read an improving text, the way a heathen is invited to read a tract.

WHY IS GRAMMAR SUCH AN ISSUE?

It seems interesting and ominous that so many English teachers deny their students grammar, and one has to wonder why all the brouhaha. Why so much hostility about the teaching of grammar in composition classes? Certainly, many people have experienced the stereotypical "Miss Prism," who dragged you up to the blackboard and made you parse sentences until you wilted in humiliation. But I never got her. I am a sixties product, and I can't remember any English teacher talking about grammar until I got to graduate school. I wish I had had to learn it!

The first problem I encounter with grammar is fear, not just in my students, but in colleagues. They find the subject intimidating. They pass that attitude along to their students. That is a pity. But the second problem is more insidious and I think stems from a more sinister root. It began to impress itself on me one day while I was reading the hundredth quasi-Marxist article on empowering the disenfranchised student. The author used rather complicated linguistic proofs to demonstrate that students should not be taught any grammar whatsoever. It dawned on me that this woman obviously had a very thorough grammatical/linguistic background herself to be able to write the article. What if no one had taught her how to approach language analytically? What does it mean when we want to withhold this kind of knowledge? And why do we want to withhold it (provided we have it in the first place)? It is certainly ironic, in an age in which most literate people are going to have to learn at least some of the mysteries of computer syntax, that English syntax is a forbidden subject.

Could it be that we don't really want to empower students? After all, I have ended up with students not only calling my bluff, but calling that of other teachers. I have ended up with students who know more about the structure of English at the end of a quarter of developmental English than some of their composition instructors do. They aren't necessarily better writers, they may not know anything about courtly love or Romantic poetry, but they know something useful, and they know that they know it! This, to me, is a beginning of franchise, of entering in. Too often it is we who trivialize grammar, not our students.

Students need to be stepped through different stages such as prewriting, revision, and proofreading so that they can make intelligent choices about strategies that work for them. But ultimately they have to produce writing that works, in school, on the job, or even for themselves. A functional or practical grammar is a starting place for many students, a place where they can enter into the mysteries of formal English and master some of the simpler conventions.

If we use a practical grammar as one more way in, as a tool, as something for students to make their own, then we needn't feel like the blue-jay in Twain's story, who was busy trying to fill what he thought was a hollow tree with acorns. After the exhausted jay has watched all his acorns disappear, he calls in some friends. They even have a conference of sorts. And, it says:

> They all examined the hole, they all made the sufferer tell it over again, then they all discussed it, and got off as many leather-headed opinions about it as an average crowd of humans could have done.
>
> "They called in more jays; then more and more, till pretty soon this whole region 'peared to have a blue flush about it. There must have been five thousand of them; and such another

> jawing and disputing and ripping and cussing, you never heard. Every jay in the whole lot put his eye to the hole and delivered a more chuckle-headed opinion about the mystery than the jay that went there before him. They examined the house all over, too. The door was standing half open, and at last, one old jay happened to go and light on it and look in. Of course, that knocked the mystery galley-west in a second. There lay the acorns, scattered all over the floor. He flopped his wings and raised a whoop. 'Come here!' he says, 'Come here, everybody; hang'd if this fool hasn't been trying t fill up a house with acorns!' They all came a-swooping down like a blue cloud, and as each fellow lit on the door and took a glance, the whole absurdity of the contract that the first jay had tackled hit him home and he fell over backwards suffocating with laughter, and the next jay took his place and done the same.
>
> "Well, sir, they roosted around here on the house-top and the trees for an hour, and guffawed over that thing like human beings. It ain't any use to tell me a blue-jay hasn't got a sense of humor, because I know better (Twain 146-7).

We know better too.

Notes

1 I discussed this problem with Victor Chapman (under the name of "Owens") in the following article: "Finding Solid Ground: Using and Articulating the Grammar of Technical Editing." *A Mission to Communicate: Proceedings of the 32nd International Technical Communication Conference.* Washington, DC: Society for Technical Communication, 1985.

In addition, Peter Elbow speaks of the problems of teachers feeling torn between standards and students. These "contraries" as he calls them, reflect the nature of the writing process itself, the tension between writing and editing that can either be internalized or externalized in a teacher or editor with fangs. See Elbow's moving article: "Embracing Contraries in the Teaching Process," *College English*, April 1983.

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Jeanie enclosed an eight-page handout with her paper. Although we cannot reproduce it here, she will probably send you a copy if you write to her at Pierce College. (See the address listings later in these proceedings.

Summary of "I'll Have to Watch My Grammar"

Maurice Scharton and Janice Neuleib
Illinois State University

[Note: Professors Scharton & Neuleib asked that this summary of their presentation be included in the proceedings. The full version has been submitted to College English. Look for it there.]

The basic premise behind this paper holds that arguments over grammar and usage are more like arguments over religion than arguments over science. Most people hold to certain "rules" with a tenacity of belief that will not sway even in the face of linguistic evidence to the contrary. Everyone's feelings about grammar are rooted in deep social assumptions that cannot be challenged without emotional upheavals and some personal pain. Given this starting point, we set out to discover whether respectable usage guides share common assumptions about the belief systems of grammar fundamentalists. The usage texts we surveyed were American Usage and Style: The Consensus, Webster's New World Guide to American Usage, the Harper Dictionary of Contemporary Usage, and Webster's Dictionary of English Usage. The research design used a 10% random sample of entries which were sorted into eight categories generated from the nature of the items such as mechanics, grammar, meaning, idioms, and tone. From the categories we derived four generalizations, each with two subheadings, governing the advice in these respected manuals.

1. Grammar gives precedence to traditional values:
    a. grammarians invoke traditional grammar like Mosaic law to arbitrate vexatious issues;
    b. mechanical perfection is the least one expects.

2. Changes in lexicon must correspond with genuine and durable changes in culture:
    a. English grammarians consider it a point of honor not to invent a word (neologism) if the language has one that will do;
    b. etymology is to meaning as precedent is to law, or writers and readers prefer older meanings of words to new ones.

3. Distinctions in tone and meaning are important, but jargon is prohibited:
    a. subtle distinctions in meaning (dais, podium, and lectern) must be honored;
    b. devices of style may become marks of triteness, redundancy, slang, and jargon.

4. The idiosyncrasies of the most careful current usage must be respected:
    a. grammarians often insist on particular idioms sometimes without logical explanation;
    b. every grammarian has a shibboleth or two by which to measure the "truly literate."

Illustrations will clarify the generalizations:

1. a. Grammarians invoke traditional grammar like Mosaic law to arbitrate vexatious issues.
The complex problem of the sexist language issue brings out various traditional grammar arguments in the handbooks. All the handbooks address the issue with varied responses, each referring to traditional grammar for its defense.

b. Mechanical perfection is the least one expects.
On such issues as the apostrophe in it's (it is) or lack thereof in its (possessive), the handbooks are merciless, giving rules on mechanics the weight of natural law.

2. a. English grammarians consider it a point of honor not to invent a word (neologism) if the language has one that will do.

Grammarians will allow fax machine and even stagflation, but almost none will accept back-formations like enthuse or the suffixes -ize and wise.

b. Etymology is to meaning as precedent is to law, or writers and readers prefer older meanings of words to new ones.

Current uses of literally can create humor when speakers mean figuratively: he "literally hammered the quarterback into the ground. (Websters Dictionary of English Usage 607). New meanings are allowed when pejoration or melioration have truly changed the word, e.g., exceptional for retarded (Harper Dictionary of Contemporary Usage 215).

3. a. Subtle distinctions in meaning (dais, podium, and lectern) must be honored.

Meaning distinctions for words like flout and flaunt are clear; the usage manuals do not agree, however, on subtler comparisons such as verbal and oral, insisting on the distinction but not making clear that verbal can mean written as well as spoken.

b. Devices of style may become marks of triteness, redundancy, slang, and jargon.

True religious fervor appears in this case; such wordiness and jargon as center around or bottom line simply are disallowed.

4. a. Grammarians often insist on particular idioms sometimes without logical explanation.

Go him one better, self-addressed, and acquiesce in rather than acquiesce to simply are and must be without question.

b. Every grammarian has a shibboleth or two by which to measure the "truly literate."

Contact and hopefully as well as the dreaded between you and I illustrate this category. Some of us are more outraged than others by these choices, but each of us has a point of moral outrage.

Our study persuaded us that the whole question of grammar as usage belongs in rhetorical theory rather in linguistics, since linguists observe phenomena and draw conclusions about data whereas rhetoricians work from principles of consistency, usefulness, correspondence, and elegance. Each Grammarian has a set of principles from which he or she works, some of which can be explained by this research project from the usage books.

The four usage books in this study spent the most entries on items 1. a. 16.5% (grammar rules), 2. b. 14.1% (meaning changes), 3. a. 18.9% (distinctions), and 4. a. 15.5% (idioms). We personally no doubt spend our most fervent energies, or at least we are most morally outraged, by failure to make usage distinctions and failure to know the appropriate shibboleth, having turned quite pale at the substitution of comprise for compose or at the usage of a certain politician when he reported that information would be given to "the Secretary of State or myself" while admiring the cadences of many nonstandard dialects. We have friends who are grammarians of other preferences and tastes and honor their differences with the same fervor with which we defend religious freedom in America.

Integrating Grammar into the Process Reading and Writing Approach

Chrystena Chrzanowski
No. Arlington H.S. &
William Paterson College

By far the worst grammatical problem that high school and beginning college students face is their inability to understand, and therefore to use, cogent sentence structure. Proponents of process reading and writing often espouse that students improve their sentence structure through the application of inherent grammatical knowledge while reading their own writing. Such instructors generally spend all of their classroom time in the valuable, if not complete, prewriting/invention and drafting stages, sometimes grasping for results in revision, but almost never completing the task with the teaching of careful editing.

Unfortunately, exclusion of this part of the process model may be the single largest disservice done to students. Certainly, in general diurnal discourse, the measure of how well one communicates includes not only what he or she says but also how well it is said.

The manner in which English courses are built seems to be the reason for this exclusion. Beyond being handed a copy of Warriner's English Grammar and Composition, few teachers are given much direction as to how or where to begin approaching editing as a skill. Furthermore, even the curricular requirements generally are listed as isolated skills: The student will read and comprehend..., The student will write compositions demonstrating..., and so forth. Somewhere at the bottom of this list an objective concerning grammar is listed. The immediate impression is that student understanding of the structure of language is not a priority. Moreover, the low priority given such skills suggests that they are "finishing touches," rather than a tool which may be used to enhance understanding within reading and writing.

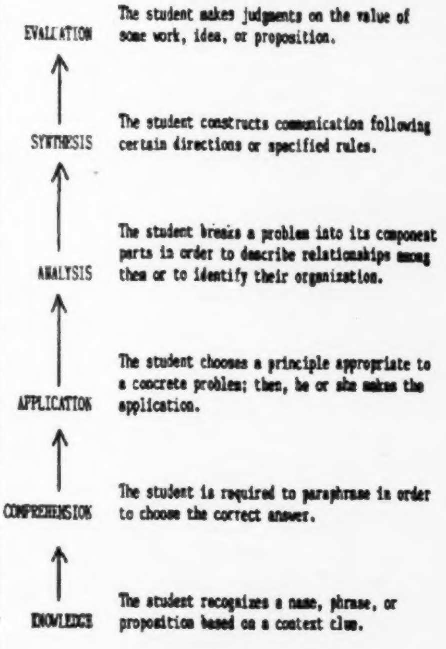
The answer to this problem, it would seem, lies in integrating these skills so that students may take them into college and/or the workplace as a unified set of overlapping cognitive abilities.

In order to accept the possible integration of the teaching of sentence structure into the overall process model, two concepts must be understood. First, writing is a recursive process; that is, writers move freely among the component parts of the model. Second, increasing evidence suggests that by helping students become active agents while reading, teachers create the possibility for them to become thinking readers who move toward the upper-level skills in Bloom's taxonomy [Figure 1].

The process model invites the teaching of sentence structure in three strategic areas: 1) during prereading or anticipatory set exercises; 2) at various junctures during the reading of assigned literature, as a problem-solving strategy; and 3) during the revision and editing stages in writing [Figure 2]. Before any of this can begin, however, certain fluency in the recognition of what constitutes a sentence must be achieved.

For years, ESL teachers have used "x-words" to help non-native speakers understand English sentence structure. The concept is simple and alleviates the frustration inherent in understanding much of the terminology used by traditionalists to label sentence parts. First, the student must accept the following definition of an English sentence:

> An English sentence is made up of a subject and a predicate.



EVALUATION	The student makes judgments on the value of some work, idea, or proposition.
SYNTHESIS	The student constructs communication following certain directions or specified rules.
ANALYSIS	The student breaks a problem into its component parts in order to describe relationships among them or to identify their organization.
APPLICATION	The student chooses a principle appropriate to a concrete problem; then, he or she makes the application.
COMPREHENSION	The student is required to paraphrase in order to choose the correct answer.
KNOWLEDGE	The student recognizes a name, phrase, or proposition based on a context clue.

FIGURE 1: Bloom's Taxonomy—
The Hierarchy of Cognitive Skills

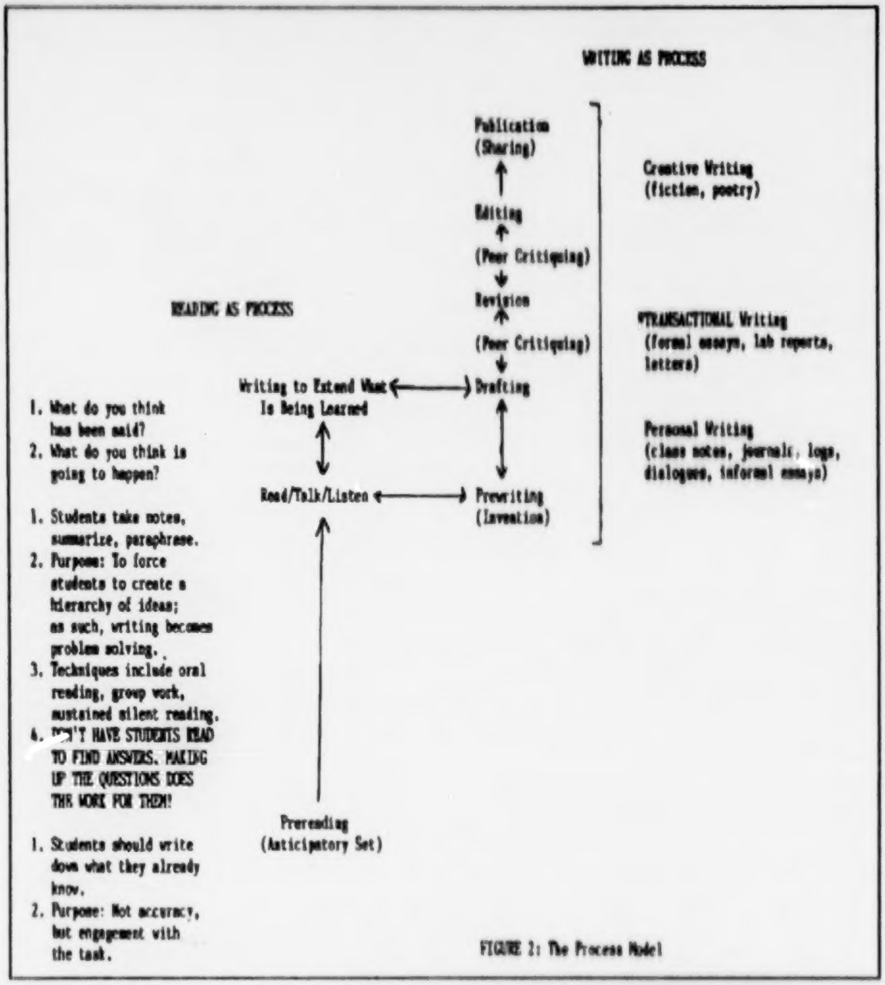

WRITING AS PROCESS
Publication (Sharing)
Editing
(Peer Critiquing)
Revision
(Peer Critiquing)
Drafting
Prewriting (Invention)
Creative Writing (fiction, poetry)
*TRANSACTIONAL Writing (formal essays, lab reports, letters)
Personal Writing (class notes, journals, logs, dialogues, informal essays)
READING AS PROCESS
Writing to Extend What Is Being Learned
Read/Talk/Listen
Prereading (Anticipatory Set)
1. What do you think has been said?
2. What do you think is going to happen?
1. Students take notes, summarize, paraphrase.
2. Purpose: To force students to create a hierarchy of ideas; as such, writing becomes problem solving.
3. Techniques include oral reading, group work, sustained silent reading.
4. DON'T HAVE STUDENTS READ TO FIND ANSWERS. MAKING UP THE QUESTIONS DOES THE WORK FOR THEM!
1. Students should write down what they already know.
2. Purpose: Not accuracy, but engagement with the task.

FIGURE 2: The Process Model

Notice that no qualifying remarks are made about either part. This contrasts sharply with the definition of "sentence" found in Warriner's:

2a. A sentence is a group of words expressing a complete thought.

and

2b. A sentence consists of two parts: the subject and the predicate. The subject of the sentence is that part about which something is being said. The predicate is that part which says something about the subject (24).

There is no need to go into a treatise on why the Warriner's definition does not work. An example will suffice:

All girls who wish to play volleyball must meet in the gym at 3:00.

According to Warriner's definition 2b, "who wish to play volleyball" might be the logical predicate of the example sentence!

Instead of leading students into such confusion, allow the simpler definition to suffice. Then, teach them the x-words, defined as any word used in English to create a yes-no question [Figure 3]. Thus, using the example above,

All girls who wish to play volleyball must meet in the gym at 3:00.
becomes
Must all girls who wish to play volleyball meet in the gym at 3:00?

defining the x-word as "must."

Using this word, students may now define the subject of the sentence as everything that falls between the x-words: "All girls who wish to play volleyball." The predicate is defined as the x-word plus everything that follows in the sentence: "must meet in the gym at 3:00."

This system always works for declarative English sentences. However, when the verb does not contain an x-word per se, the yes-no question must be formed using a "hidden" x-word: do, does, or did:

The girls who play volleyball meet in the gym at 3:00.
Do the girls who play volleyball meet in the gym at 3:00?
The girls who play volleyball do meet in the gym at 3:00.

Students quickly learn to place the hidden x-word, first, at the point where it creates a yes-no question, then, at the point where it creates an emphatic statement. They also learn quickly to recognize "The girls who play volleyball" as the subject of the sentence and "meet in the gym at 3:00" as the predicate.

do	will	would	have	am
does	can	could	has	is
did	shall	should	had	are
	may	might		was
	must			were

FIGURE 3: X-Words

Again, notice the avoidance of jargon like "adjective clause,"

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which would ordinarily be part of the grammar teacher's repertoire. Its necessity is eliminated, as are the terms "noun" and "verb" because the focus shifts from naming parts of the sentence to the sentence as a whole.

Practice in recognizing subjects and predicates may supply a topic for prereading/anticipatory set exercises in reading. Background information on a genre or time period from which a piece of literature comes can easily provide sentences for students to parse in this manner. Interestingly, they internalize the information more completely in this way, and this becomes more evident the more they are required to use syntax prior to reading.

Finally, teachers must demand that students check their own sentences using the x-word system. This is quite easy if they learn to write on every other line of their composition paper. They may work in pairs or small groups, editing one another's sentences, and they should eventually be required to perform this editorial test individually. Remarkably, even academically deficient students are capable of recognizing fragments and run-ons on their own when testing their work in this manner.

Of course, teachers should expect that students be capable of more than using the simplest sentence structures before leaving high school. Again, this is possible if teachers integrate exercises with a two-fold purpose: 1) Exercises should focus on one aspect of sentence structure at a time until students clearly have mastered all of the basic structures; and 2) Exercises should take for their content the material being studied or student-generated sentences whenever possible.

For example, prior to assigning background reading, the teacher might single out sentences for students to examine. These sentences undoubtedly will be more sophisticated than those students generally write. The following sentence might be used in this manner in an American literature class:

> The promise of land, good wages, or some other benefit brought permanent settlers to America, first to the South, shortly afterward to the North" (Adventures 3).

With little prompting, students who understand the x-word process will change the statement into a question and then shift from simple to emphatic past tense:

> Did the promise of land, good wages, or some other benefit bring permanent settlers to America, first to the South, shortly afterward to the North?
>
> The promise of land, good wages, or some other benefit did bring permanent settlers to America, first to the South, shortly afterward to the North.

Now, students may demonstrate how they know that this is an English sentence based on the definition they have learned.

1. Roughly one hundred English men and women left the Old World for the New in 1620.

X

1. (Did) roughly one hundred English men and women (leave) the Old World for the New in 1620?

X

1. Roughly one hundred English men and women (did leave) the Old World for the New in 1620.

1. Roughly one hundred English men and women left the Old World for the New in 1620.

2. They were not eager to face the hardships of the wilderness.
3. Their fellow countrymen prevented them from practicing their religion freely.
4. Some were even tortured because of their beliefs.
5. One of these beliefs concerned divine grace.
6. People who were able to love God and his creation wholeheartedly were said to exhibit signs of this grace.
7. Puritans valued plainness in their religious practices.
8. Their intent to purify religious practices that they saw as human decoration accounts for the name "Puritans."
9. The New World and all of its hardships came to represent a place God had chosen for them.
10. This led them to try to create a new Eden.

FIGURE 4: Example Exercise Combining Prereading
and Subject-Predicate Recognition

Adapted from "The Beginnings of the American Tradition," Adventures in American Literature, p. 7.

Copying several sentences into notebooks

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has value in itself: On any given weekday, art students copy the masters hanging in museums. Moreover, by extending the process so that students must look closely at the grammatical structure of the various sentences, teachers prompt the understanding and use of such structures, thereby aiding reading and writing.

Locating sentences for student examination is not a difficult task for the teacher, but remember to look for the type of sentence structure being stressed. Furthermore, examining three to five sentences is a valid homework assignment once students understand the x-word process, so a mere 10-20 minutes of classroom time need to be used for review.

Teachers will need to pay more attention to prereading when working with poor readers. Sophisticated sentence structure often stymies comprehension in such cases. This does not mean that the material needs to be thrown out in favor of "easier" reading. Poor readers are self-conscious enough; it is far preferable to show them that they can read.

In such situations, teachers may read and summarize background, say, on the Puritans, which is found in the text. Next, revise the sentences so that none are coordinate and type them in list form [Figure 4]. After working on an exercise of this nature in class, students will invariably read and understand the material they believe is "too hard."

Practice recognizing subjects and predicates is handled most expeditiously during reading exercises. As they are reading, students should be required to stop occasionally to summarize what they have read or to anticipate (in writing) what might happen next, based on the context of the story. Again, homework is a vital component in learning. Thus, students might choose several of their notebook sentences for examination; again, little classroom time is then necessary for review.

Last, students may use this acquired editing strategy on their own writing, offering proof of their ability to recognize sentences and structures that are not sentences by determining subjects and predicates. Thus, regardless of the nature of the writing topic or the length of time spent in prewriting, drafting, and revision, students can be expected to perform at least a minimal editing test of their papers before turning them in.

This format--teaching, practice, and use of the acquired editing strategy--is essential and should be used during every phase of the teaching of sentence structure. For purposes of brevity here, however, the phases themselves will be emphasized over the format.

Once students thoroughly recognize subjects and predicates, they may begin moving toward the concept of sentence patterns. They already understand the first, most basic pattern:
S-P.

"S;" of course, denotes "subject"; "P," predicate." Note the inclusion of a period at the end of the pattern abbreviation.

Next, students may move toward understanding simple single-word and short phrase modifiers that appear at the beginnings and ends of sentences. Two new patterns may be discussed, sought in reading, and used in writing:

F, S-P.
S-P-E.

The first of these patterns, Front [comma] Subject Predicate, allows for the addition of what is traditionally called an adjectival phrase or adverbial to the beginning of the sentence. It also shows how the comma is appropriately used in such sentences. Returning to the model American literature class mentioned earlier, background information again provides examples:

> Like the Puritans and the first Southern settlers, Americans who lived through the second half of the eighteenth century often wrote in order to understand and report on their lives in the New World (Adventures 50).
>
> In 1773 Parliament set a new tax on tea (51).
>
> That December, some Bostonians dumped chests full of taxed tea into their harbor--an event that became know as the Boston Tea Party (51).

Students will gleefully pounce on the missing comma in the second example as an error. Let Them! It is far better for them to use punctuation consistently than to become confused by rules such as:

A single introductory prepositional phrase need not be followed by a comma unless it is parenthetical (by the way, on the contrary, etc.) or the comma is necessary to prevent confusion (Warriner's 529).

The second pattern, Subject Predicate End, allows for the addition of simple adverbials to the ends of sentences. Again, correct punctuation is an integral part of the pattern abbreviation.

Students will have greater difficulty recognizing end structures, so this pattern is most easily taught and practiced using slotting exercises. Such exercises are best used during reading as problem solving; otherwise, students may not own enough information to appropriately fill in the blanks [Figure 5]. To encourage use of this newly acquired editing strategy, simply request that students revise several sentences in a paper they are writing to conform to the given patterns.

Rather than endlessly working toward mastery of any single aspect of sentence structure, it is advisable to go on to other sentence patterns quickly. Then, those students who are more adept with language will begin utilizing compound and complex sentence structures, while others will pick up on their use in later lessons that combine these skills. Just as writing is recursive, so may editing be, especially if the study of syntax is consistently integrated into not only writing lessons but reading discussions, as well.

Coordination poses serious problems for students in its more sophisticated patterns; however, most are comfortable and competent with its most basic uses. Indeed, coordination occurs on so many levels in English that it is curiously handled on merely four pages in Warriner's! For a more complete unit on coordinate sentence patterns, teachers may introduce the following:

S-P; S-P.
S-P, [coordinating conjunction] S-P.
S-P. T, S-P. ("T" indicates "transition")
S-P; T, S-P.

With all of these patterns, students must continue to use the x-word test to be certain that they are writing and coordinating complete sentences.

The first pattern is employed infrequently, so it may be de-emphasized. Students should, however, be warned that the complete S-P's which are joined by the semicolon must be very closely related. This is also a good time to talk about the semicolon as a mark of punctuation and to warn students against using a comma in its place. Punctuation should not be discussed outside of the sentence pattern or structure, though. The reason the marks appear as they do is quite simple: This is how they are conventionally used within the patterns. Discussion regarding alternate uses of punctuation will occur naturally the more sentences are examined as part of the reading process.

Crèvecoeur describes America ____. He recognizes that most immigrants left their homelands ____. Hunger, severe laws and punishments, and tenancy forced by the rich are examples ____. Crèvecoeur compares their life in Europe ____. In America, these plants took root and flourished ____.

Many of these new citizens abandon their nationalities to mel: ____. These people are characterized ____. Crèvecoeur believes that they will complete the circle ____.

Crèvecoeur also suggests that Americans will one day become distinct ____. However, he warns them ____. Here, they will be rewarded ____. Their labor will be founded ____. Religious obligations include only a small salary for the minister and thanks ____.

FIGURE 5: Example Exercise Combining Problem-Solving and Slotting End Structures into Sentences

Based on an excerpt from "Letters from an American Farmer," Adventures American Literature, pp. 86-87.

The second pattern is also easily approached. Most students come to high school knowing six of the seven coordinating conjunctions, "nor" being the exception. Therefore, when asked to write sentences to match the S-P, [coordinating conjunction] S-P. pattern, they tend to overwrite:

> I hurried home from school yesterday, and I changed so that I could get out on the court.

Because they know how to determine subjects, this problem is easily corrected by explaining that the comma and the second subject may be eliminated when the second subject is identical to the first. No negative comment regarding repetition needs to be made, and real editing actually begins to take place:

> I hurried home from school yesterday and changed so that I could get out on the court.

Much more time will be needed to introduce the concept of using transitions [Figure 6] to appropriately coordinate sentences. The problem does not seem to lie in the patterns themselves; in fact, students are eager to attempt writing lengthy sen-

- above all
- actually
- additionally
- after all
- afterwards
- again
- also
- alternatively
- apparently
- as a consequence
- as a result
- at any rate
- besides
- certainly
- consequently
- even so
- eventually
- finally
- first
- for example
- for instance
- for this reason
- fortunately
- furthermore
- hence
- however
- in addition
- incidentally
- in conclusion
- in consequence
- in contrast
- indeed
- in other words
- in particular
- in spite of that
- instead
- in that case
- in the meantime
- meanwhile
- moreover
- nevertheless
- next
- on the contrary
- on the other hand
- otherwise
- similarly
- specifically
- still
- that is
- therefore
- thus
- to conclude

FIGURE 6: Commonly Used Transitions

tences. The confusion seems to arise because transitions are functional, rather than words with specific denotative definitions. Thus, students tend to misuse them, and ultimately, constant exposure to their correct use is essential. Therefore, overdependence on student writing when introducing coordinate patterns tends to be antiproductive. Instead, move them toward sentence combining.

Sentence combining works well as a prereading/anticipatory set exercise. To create such an exercise, simply summarize the reading for which students are responsible, manipulating the sentences to fit whatever pattern(s) are being emphasized.

Opponents of this approach often levy two criticisms: 1) If students are given the cue with which to create the sentence, they are not really combining thoughts on their own; and 2) Students who summarize information prior to reading are "given the answers."

The first criticism is easily answered, for as students become more competent at using sophisticated structures, they may be allowed the freedom of expression they ultimately need to possess. One cannot ever perform, let alone appreciate, what one cannot do, though. By initially giving students direction, the teacher accomplishes two goals. The first is to put in the hands of students a specific tool for working with language. All too often, those tools seem second nature. Indeed, in speech, they are. However, they are threateningly hard work in reading and writing, and without being pushed, students will tend to stay where it is "safe"--in the realm of simple sentence structure. Second, and more practical in nature, guided assignments provide proof that specific grammatical issues are being addressed and measured in the classroom. In a world where teachers are being constantly reminded of their accountability, such documentation is necessary.

The second criticism involves what may be a more serious issue regarding the teacher's philosophy of education. If goals are to be set that require of students higher level thinking skills, the time necessary to review the who, what, when, and where in a given piece of literature must be cut. It is only when students move toward the why and how in these readings that they actually begin to think.

Part of that thinking process involves syntax. Students must be required to approach discussions of literature in a state of preparedness. Often, teachers forget that this, too, is a learned activity. Therefore, either as homework or as a class opener, using either directed journal/log or freewriting styles, students should write about an issue apparent in the literature at hand prior to the discussion. This writing should be used, and where it is appropriate, extended upon. Here, sentence structure becomes part of the problem-solving aspect of language. Furthermore, once students are in a state of readiness, the teacher may point to specifics in the literature. (All examples are taken from Washington Irving's "The Devil and Tom Walker.")

> Whatever the woman could lay hands on she hid away; a hen could not cackle but she was on the alert to secure the new-laid egg (Adventures 107).
>
> It was late in the dusk of evening when Tom Walker reached the old fort, and he paused there awhile to rest himself (107).
>
> He prayed loud and strenuously, as if heaven were to be taken by force of lungs. Indeed, one might always tell when he had sinned most during the week, by the clamor of his Sunday devotion (112).

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1. In "The Devil and Tom Walker," Tom is a greedy man.
[for this reason]
The devil's promise of treasure entices him.

1. In "The Devil and Tom Walker," Tom is a greedy man; for this reason, the devil's promise of treasure entices him. -OR-

1. In "The Devil and Tom Walker," Tom is a greedy man. For this reason, the devil's promise of treasure entices him.

2. From the beginning, Tom is aware of the devil's power. [indeed]
Old Scratch demonstrates his supernatural abilities.

3. The devil fells a tree bearing the name of Crowninshield.
[consequently]
Tom learns of the rich buccaneer's death.

4. When Old Scratch presses his finger on Tom's forehead, the mark is permanent. [thus]
The devil marks Tom as his accomplice.

5. After Tom's first encounter with the devil, he tries to resist temptation. [in contrast]
His wife immediately sets out with household valuables to bargain with Old Scratch.

6. The woman never returns home. [therefore]
Tom goes in search of her and the missing valuables.

7. Tom does not find his wife. [instead]
He finds her checked apron with a heart and liver in it.

8. Some time passes, and Tom is grateful to the devil for the loss of his shrewish wife. [finally]
He meets Old Scratch again.

FIGURE 7: Example Exercise Combining Prereading
and Sentences Using Transitions

Based on "The Devil and Tom Walker," Adventures in American Literature, pp. 106-113.

> Thus Tom was the universal friend of the needy and acted like a 'friend in need'; that is to say, he always exacted good pay and good security (111).

Immediately recognizable in these quotations are literary elements appropriate for class discussions: characterization, in the first; setting, in the second; conflict, in the third; and irony, in the last. Furthermore, the how of Irving's technique for using these elements is more readily accessible to students when they are working with specifics, and the writing objective regarding the use of specific details to explain general concepts is being addressed simultaneously.

Equally recognizable are the specific patterns of the sentences chosen for examination. They all contain transitions. Thus, the discussion may be extended by asking students to determine the pattern of each sentence. If they have worked with this type of coordination during prewriting lessons, this should be fairly easy. Now, throw them some alternate structures and ask them to determine why each is "correct," that is, why each one appropriately conveys the author's meaning.

> The lonely wayfarer shrunk within himself at the horrid clamor and clapperclawing; eyed the den of discord askance; and hurried on his way, rejoicing, if a bachelor, in his celibacy (107).

> She must have died game, however; for it is said Tom noticed many prints of cloven feet deeply stamped around the tree, and found handfuls of hair that looked as if they had been plucked from the coarse black shock of the woodsman (110).

> As Tom waxed old, however, he grew thoughtful (112).

As students begin to work in this realm, they are making meaning based on their learned use of sentence structure. In fact, they may move even further, locating in the story sentence structures that they find curious, working toward solving the meaning of these sentences. With this much background, virtually no student will have problems revising sentences in a paper he or she is writing. Indeed, better students will begin mimicking what they read and will move toward experimenting with their own sentence structure more freely.

The last aspect of sentence structure to be explored here concerns subordination. Although these patterns match the F, S-P. and S-P-E. patterns mentioned earlier, this sort of front and end construction necessitates knowledge of words that function as subordinators [Figure 8]. Thus, it works well to teach the words, occasionally scrambling them with transitions to ensure that students learn the difference. Then, as was true with the coordinate patterns, a sentence combining exercise based on the literature at hand is a good prereading activity [Figure 9].

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Once students understand this much about sentence structure, poetry -- often the nemesis of the English teacher and student alike -- may be read and discussed productively.

First, poetry should be read aloud almost exclusively. Initially, the teacher probably will have to do the reading, but if he or she is enthusiastic, students will want to try it, too. This is especially true if a simple rule is strictly adhered to: Poetry must be read for punctuation, that is, for sentence structure -- not line by line. Once the reading is over, students should write, again in directed journal/log or freewriting styles, their immediate impressions. The following, by Ralph Waldo Emerson, will serve as an example:

The Rhodora:

On Being Asked, Whence Is the Flower?

In May, when sea winds pierced our solitudes,
I found the fresh Rhodora in the woods,
Spreading its leafless blooms in a damp nook,
To please the desert and the sluggish brook.
The purple petals, fallen in the pool,
Made the black water with their beauty gay;
Here might the redbird come his plumes to cool,
And court the flower that cheapens his array.
Rhodora! if the sages ask thee why
This charm is wasted on the earth and sky,
Tell them, dear, that if eyes were made for seeing,
Then Beauty is its own excuse for being:
Why thou wert there, O rival of the rose!
I never thought to ask, I never knew;
But, in my simple ignorance, suppose
The selfsame Power that brought me there brought you.

after
although
as
because
before
if (if ever, if only)
in order that
in spite of the fact that
inasmuch as
now that
once
since
so that
though
unless
until
when, whenever
where, whereas, wherever
whether...or not
whichever
while

FIGURE 8: Commonly Used Subordinators

After the reading and written response, students should determine where the poem's sentences begin and end. The first two are fairly simple; however, some discussion may arise over Emerson's use of the colon after the twelfth line. This provides an opportunity to discuss -- generally -- how and why a colon is used and to show how it functions as a marker like a period in this specific case. Moreover, and perhaps more important, determining the sentences will give students an understanding of form, so that if the teacher chooses, he or she might talk about quatrains, specifically, or, generally, poetic lines functioning as units. Recognition of form inevitably leads to better understanding of content.

Now, even the first line of the poem lends itself to grammatical analysis. After determining the subject of the sentence -- "I" -- students may move quickly to the concept of the "speaker." Care should be taken to explain to students that the speaker may or may not represent the author, even when the pronoun "I" is used. This provides a springboard for what the poem is about, as well, for many students will have assumed in their written responses that the poem is about the flower. Perhaps now is the time to suggest that Emerson might have been using the flower as a vehicle for saying something else. Students might be asked, then, to find more evidence of the speaker's presence in the poem.

This new evidence -- lines 9-16 -- lends itself to discussion of apostrophe, a figure of speech in which an absent person, abstract concept, or inanimate object is directly addressed. Once again, careful examination of sentence structure helps students to internalize the definition:

Rhodora! if the sages ask thee why
This charm is wasted on the earth and sky,
Tell them, dear, that if eyes were made for seeing,
Then Beauty is its own excuse for being:

Asked to use the x-word test to determine the subject of this sentence, students will come up empty-handed or will need to be corrected because the sentence is written in the imperative mood. Students recognize (and often resent) commands, so talking about how the imperative is equally effective as a form of urgent address may spark lively discussion.

The fourth quatrain (sentence) features yet another literary device -- anastrophe, the inversion of the usual word order of parts of a sentence. This device, obviously grammatical in nature, elicits comical responses from students; in fact, some choose to define it as "the way a poet sticks to the rhyme scheme." To demonstrate that more than this is involved, have students revise various lines into more colloquial parlance:

> Why thou wert there, O rival of the rose!
> I never thought to ask, I never knew;
> But, in my simple ignorance, suppose
> The selfsame Power that brought me there brought you.
>
> O rival of the rose! I never though to ask you or
> knew why you were there, but my understanding that I
> am a simple, ignorant creature leads me to suppose
> that some greater power brought both of us there.

Obviously, the revision will vary, but with revised sentences, students can begin looking at choices ... style. They can decide why the purple petals "made the black water with their beauty gay," instead of made the black water gay with their beauty. They may discuss why Emerson chooses to have "the redbird come his plumes to cool," rather than having him cool his plumes. In short, students now play with the language. They have transcended the common identifying process that allows them to pick out examples of personification, similes, and so on. They read at a level that approaches higher-level cognitive skills. Finally, understanding both overall and interior forms gives students a feeling of power and mastery over the material. They often want to write (or to revise what they have written earlier) because they know what the poem is about and can prove it.

Students who work on these terms learn that they can read and write. They gain a sense of power. Why shouldn't they? Language is power, and grammatical structure is at the very heart of language.

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Warriner, John E. and Francis Griffith. English Grammar and Composition, Complete Course. Orlando: Harcourt, 1977.

1. Science answers questions. [while]
   Poetry asks them.
1. While science answers questions, poetry asks them. -OR-
1. Science answers questions while poetry asks them.

2. Emerson encounters powerful images in nature. [after]
   He questions where they came from and what their purpose is.
3. A simple flower may inspire people to think. [until]
   They realize that the questions are more important than the answers.
4. For Emerson, the rhodora is an emblem of beauty. [whereas]
   Scientists classify it as a North American shrub.
5. Neither of these approaches is wrong. [because]
   They serve different purposes.
6. Emerson chooses the path of intuition and imagination. [so that]
   He may understand the flower's essence in abstract terms.
7. Scientists observe a specimen directly. [in order that]
   They might explore its concrete properties.
8. Students need to explore both of these approaches in their
   own work. [if]
   They want to become critical, creative thinkers.

FIGURE 9: Example Exercise Combining Prereading and Sentences Using Subordinators

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The Role of Grammar Teaching in Higher Education

George Oliver
University of Maryland

Much grammatical instruction at the university level -- either in the classroom or in textbooks -- is still unknowingly based on 18th century notions of grammar as a skill necessary for improving one's social status, i.e. grammar as a social class criterion, grammar as manners. Yet for most of this century, and certainly in the last 30 years, the science of linguistics has suggested a different way of looking at language: in this view, English grammar is seen as a natural phenomenon, which, due to historical, cultural, and psychological factors, has taken a variety of forms, all of which are systematically related to each other.

Unfortunately, most of what linguistics has learned has not filtered down to the educated population, academic or otherwise. The result is that educated Americans may know something about the structure of the universe but nothing about the structure of a simple English sentence or phrase. This claim is easy to test: ask a non-linguist to explain the ambiguity of a phrase like *American History Teacher* or *Abnormal Psychology Professor*, and you'll probably be met with blank stares or some explanation of word meanings. Basic modern notions like phrase structure are as mysterious to most of us as the theory of relativity, yet they needn't be and shouldn't be.

Such general ignorance of English grammar has unfortunate effects, both amusing and sad. For one, public discussions of English inevitably either decry the decline of the language with every newly coined term and perceived language change or reveal common linguistic misconceptions. Recently, for example, on a Washington D.C. talkshow, the discussion centered around the history of English. Callers asked questions like Why are adverbs disappearing from English? How do you know what the correct pronunciation of a word is? Why is the English of young people worse than that of their parents?

Another, more socially serious, effect of linguistic ignorance, is that dialect variations (both social and regional) are used as acceptable weapons of discrimination and prejudice. A public official who want to get reelected probably wouldn't be caught even off the record uttering a statement like "The U.S. Congress don't have no good budget plan." Less amusing, speakers of other dialects may be perceived as having greater or lesser intelligence or worth, depending on the social status of the dialect. Such attitudes about language variation can affect hiring practices, jury perceptions, and public policy making.

And finally, closer to home, in university writing classes grammar is seen mainly as a rubric for correcting errors rather than a way to generate options or clarify arguments. In his 1985 article in **College English**, Mike Rose demonstrated that most grammar teaching is still based on notions of remediation started in the late 1800's and supported later by behaviorist models of learning, models which were debunked by the 60's.[1]

I conclude that universities have failed and are still failing to fulfill their mission of education in the area of one of the most basic of human activities, communication. I would like to suggest here what I see as the general role of grammar teaching at the university level. The effects of giving grammar its proper 1990's place serves both the philosophical and practical goals of education.

It's always a good idea in such a lofty discussion to define some terms, so let me define the phrase "grammar teaching." This definition is important because the sense and logic of the arguments following depend on it. By the word **grammar** I mean some sort of **descriptive grammar** -- a grammar of what's and why's rather than should's and shalt's. Such a grammar deals with the syntax, semantics, and phonology of natural language, and includes the usual linguistic notion of competence. In this paper, the term will be used to mean basically "syntax." In contrast, of course, is a **prescriptive** grammar, a grammar of usage, in which linguistic choices are made based on social considerations. To teach prescriptive grammar as anything but an interesting anachronism is pointless since its function is not strictly intellectual judgement and understanding but rather social evaluation and drill.

Charles Fries observed over 40 years ago that in no other field, including literature, would such misinformation be given credence as that which passes for knowledge in prescriptive grammar; it has a long tradition, true, but it is based on a misreading of history, logic, and obvious facts about the nature of language. That it has survived so long is a monument to the desire of humans to rank and evaluate each other, an interesting social fact which certainly could be explored. In my own grammar class, for example, I discuss prescriptive rules like "Don't end a sentence with a preposition" or "Don't use double negatives," but I make clear that while both sentences are descriptively grammatical, the latter will likely cast one as uneducated while the former will not; but I also make it clear that such a judgement is a social one, very much bound by time and place, since there is obviously nothing linguistically illogical about such sentences.

By the word **teaching** I mean both lecture to and exploration with the students, the end result again being knowledge and understanding. Those who have been through a good linguistics class probably remember that the approach was largely inductive, working from particular sentences to the general rule. The strength of a linguistic approach to grammar is that no special labs or equipment is needed in order to get the students to understand something about the nature of a natural system like language, or what a theory is, or even how the scientific method works -- the raw data is in what we speak or write and in the judgments we make of these acts of communication.

What I've just discussed really is a general educational goal. As Dr. J. Robert Dorfman, Dean of Academic Affairs at the University of Maryland says,

> There are two fundamental questions which a university exists to answer -- what's it like to be a human being and what's the world like in which human beings find themselves?... In a way, people here should have their heads on fire all the time with ideas, with excitement, and with the beauty of intellectual life.... All ... ideas, the positive and the destructive ones, all have to be examined with the same level of vigor and commitment to knowledge.[2]

Typically, grammar teaching occurs in English Departments, so let us begin there with looking at its role. Here there are two possible places for grammar teaching: in a grammar class and in a non-grammar class, such as a literature or writing class. As far as I know, very little grammar is actually taught in literature classes here at the University of Maryland, and probably rightly so since the emphasis is on the literary works at hand. Any grammar learned is most likely gained unsystematically through paper corrections and it is probably of a prescriptive nature. I'll speak to the role of grammar in writing courses in a moment.

Grammar courses are another matter. Here is a typical description of the sophomore level grammar class at the University of Maryland,

> This course provides an overview of basic structures of formal standard written English, including parts of speech, punctuation, diction, usage, and sentence patterns. Practical elements from traditional, structural, and transformational grammar will be used.

There is a hidden problem here, peculiar perhaps to the University of Maryland, and that is that many sections of this course have been taught as prescriptive grammar courses, in spite of the rather modern-sounding last sentence of the course description. The reason for this mis-match is that the course has sometimes been staffed with teachers who are not trained in structural grammars. As I suggested earlier, a prescriptive approach should not be given an important place at a university. The other problem in this description is more universal to such courses: it assumes that the purpose of grammar is to serve the goal of better writing. While this may seem uncontroversial, I believe that there are three good reasons to reject such a purpose.

First, at the level of higher education, courses should first emphasize knowledge and information, not application. In other words, theory has to come before practice, and certainly if an English Department is going to offer only one grammar class, it should give the students an understanding of the grammatical system, not expect them to apply what they know before they are in control of the system. We don't expect surgeons to do surgery without a knowledge of anatomy and surgical techniques. Yet we often expect students to dissect their writing at some sentence level without any understanding of sentence anatomy.

Second, at the university level, courses should not have to serve any particular pragmatic end. We don't ask that biology courses be specifically targeted to help farmers grow better crops. A farmer who knows something about biology and ecology may be able to grow better and healthier crops, but that is the farmer's business, not the business of the biologist. Indeed, knowledge of biology can serve many ends, including environmental activism or lawmaking, as well as farming. Likewise, we don't teach history or Shakespeare in order that Americans be more patriotic or better citizens. Such courses may have this effect, but this will depend on the student. Why should grammar be different? Only, it seems because of the historically traditional connection between composition and grammar.

My experience is that students take grammar courses for all kinds of reasons, and if students see connections between grammar and politics or computer science or literary style or editing, then I encourage their explorations. For English departments to teach grammar for some pragmatic end, whether academic or social, is as silly as a Biology department offering a botany class for the purpose of identifying weeds, or sociology classes teaching good manners for formal dining. the analogy is not specious: to a botanist, the notion of a weed as a bad or undesirable plant is an uneducated notion; to a modern grammarian, so is the notion of bad grammar (in the popular sense).

Third, real excitement in learning anything, to paraphrase Dr. Dorfman, comes from a sense that one understands how and why some phenomenon works the way it does. The purpose of higher education, as I see it, is to bring order out of chaos, to illuminate the human condition and free us from superstition, to empower us with the ability to solve problems and make creative leaps of understanding, and to move us with the beauty and complexity of the world. True, these are lofty ends, but I doubt that many of us would be teaching if we didn't believe that in some respect this is what we were doing. I believe that descriptive grammar wherever it is discussed or used can accomplish these purposes; prescriptive grammar, by definition, cannot.

So what about the role of grammar teaching in the writing class? The state of grammar teaching in the writing class has, at least in many areas of the country, come full circle from the last century. Robert Connors notes in his article "Grammar in American College Composition" that only after 1850 were grammar and writing linked, together with rhetorical theory.[3] The influence of rhetorical theory waned after 1930, the influence of traditional grammar slipped after 1950, and by the 60's, particularly after the publication of the Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, Schoer report in 1963,[4] grammar teaching in the classroom began to take a nosedive. In some universities, it is all but dead, and no writing teacher would admit to teaching grammar.

How do teachers justify not teaching grammar in the writing class? On the one hand we could say that if the studies are true that teaching grammar does not lead to results, then there is no point in doing it. On the other hand even if the studies are flawed, we can always argue on the basis of the linguistic notion of competence: if every native speaker has an internal system which is inherently coherent and logical, then what is the point of teaching grammar anyway? We may as well concentrate on arbitrary issues peculiar to writing like punctuation, spelling, and capitalization.

This certainly seems to be the general feeling at the University of Maryland. In an informal survey of some of the writing instructors, I found that no one felt it was necessary to discuss grammar on a regular basis or have grammar lessons except as the need arose; yet when such needs arose, they covered the usual handbook problems -- subject-verb agreement, dangling participles, use of passive voice, use of expletive it and there, and the usual punctuation problems. (Note that all of these issues come under the heading of error correction.) One wonders what exactly these teachers can say about these issues without using grammatical terminology or drawing from grammatical concepts.

On the other hand, grammar teaching in the prescriptive sense is not dead everywhere. In much of the South, prescriptive handbooks are still classroom bibles. An acquaintance of mine who teachers at Howard University, a predominantly black university in Washington D.C., assures me that prescriptive Standard English is rigorously enforced. Here, of course, the pragmatic reason is rather obvious: black professors know too well how linguistic prejudice compounds the racial issues that black graduates have to deal with.

To those familiar with and sympathetic to the issues, Martha Kolln's defense of the role of grammar in the schools is a lone beacon in the night, although Dr. Kolln's arguments are not specific to higher education.[5] But her arguments have been largely ignored by the composition establishment. The reason is simple. The term "grammar" as Dr. Kolln is using it -- the usual linguistic notion -- is either not known, poorly known, or misunderstood by most writing teachers. It is the primary reason, I believe, why they have abandoned grammar teaching: since writing teachers are not asked to learn enough of modern grammar to be in control of the theory, much less of the tools, they give up trying to make sense of modern grammars; so they fall back on inadequate prescriptive grammar books or scrap the subject altogether. A number of instructors at the University of Maryland have told me that they don't do much grammar in their writing classes mainly because they really are not comfortable with any system, old or new. In the face of this, it's not surprising that grammar in the writing class has died -- too many teachers are either afraid or ignorant of grammar; the rest see it as irrelevant to anything but usage correction.

Of course, as any writing teacher can tell you, a writing teacher has much more to do than just teach grammar; a writing class is basically a course in applied liberal arts: it is concurrently a course in applied rhetoric, applied logic, applied linguistics, applied library science, applied document design theory, applied literary theory. And of course these applications assume that the writer is in control of some material, which is another topic altogether. In fact, so much is expected of writing teachers, at least at the University of Maryland, that no teacher and no writing course can cover them all well, if for no other reason than that no one who teaches such a course can possibly know them all well. Yet of all the areas of knowledge that teachers could be in control of, there are two areas that every writing teacher ought to know well, rhetoric and grammar. Both of these fields use tools that are indispensable for writers who want to be in control of what they write. And certainly analyzing any piece of writing depends on understanding the principles of these two fields.

Let me summarize. First, if grammar is to be taught as a class in an English Department, it should be descriptive, and should not serve any particular pragmatic end. It should relate itself to the English department's interests, either rhetorical or literary, but should also relate to the university at large. If grammar is taught only in a linguistics department, then these same ends should apply. Such a course should represent the current state of knowledge about language in general and about English in particular and will thus serve the educational goals of a university. I have rarely had a student finish my course in descriptive grammar who did not say that the course had radically altered their perception of their language to the good, and in a way that traditional grammar had not. And many students find connections to other areas that they are studying.

This requires, of course, that the teachers who teach grammar be trained enough in the subject to be comfortable teaching it to others. This does not mean that all grammar teachers (much less writing teachers) need to be theoretical linguists, but there is no reason why they shouldn't understand the basics of what is currently known about grammar and the tools of grammatical analysis. There is no reason, for example, for teachers to continue teaching the idea that English has a future tense -- a prescriptive fact borrowed from Latin but not applicable to Germanic languages, like English, which only has two tense inflections. The fact that ideas about language will change may be distressing to those trying to keep up with the ideas, but that, of course, is exactly why universities exist.

Second, grammar instruction must take its place in the writing classroom, along with rhetoric, as the two most important systems of knowledge that writers can bring to the process of writing. Again, only a descriptive approach is reasonable here, with error correction taking its place alongside higher level issues. This requires that writing teachers, too, know enough to extract from grammatical theory what is needed. To throw grammar out as irrelevant is to deny that students are expected to know basic constructs when we send them to a writing center, a handbook, or a style book, or when we bring up problems on a class-needs basis. But worse, it denies students access to knowledge about their language -- knowledge that is challenging and stimulating and liberating and, yes, even useful.

But let me go further. Knowledge of grammar is not the same for an educated person as knowledge of a technical field like chemistry or electrical engineering. Thousands of documents, speeches, media reports, and interviews are produced every day in as many activities and jobs, and thousands of daily evaluations of these are done based on style, clarity, and any number of personal linguistic prejudices. Is it unreasonable to expect of educated people that they understand the basis for their judgments?

Perhaps we can expect the grammar pendulum to eventually swing the other way. Let me quote again from Robert Connors:

> The tale of grammar is by no means over; even today sentence diagramming has voluble champions, and traditional grammar, against all odds, is attempting a comeback. A great deal of the history of composition in America seems to be a clumsy shuffle-dance of grammar with rhetoric, with first one and then another leading. It will not end soon, for the wish for certainty and algorithmic closure represented by the one struggles always with the desire for originality and creativity represented by the other. So long as language is part science, part art, and part magic, the grammarians and the rhetoricians will be struggling with each other to lead the dance.[6]

Ideally, every student (and teacher) should take at least one descriptive grammar course, and perhaps someday it will happen. Certainly if they did, the kind of public ignorance of language that one can hear and read frequently would be less tolerated. But there are other things that we as English teachers who support descriptive grammar teaching at the university can do. None of these are new with me. They have been argued for at least 50 years, but they bear repeating.

- Argue to your departments that they replace any traditional grammar courses with descriptive ones.

- Argue to your departments that students of English literature and education be required to take courses minimally in descriptive syntax and the history of English.

- Organize grammar seminars and discussions for faculty on these issues.

- Help develop grammar materials that will encourage teachers of composition to explore these issues realistically.

- Support textbooks and handbooks that describe language, rather than those that prescribe and proscribe.

If we at the university want to help others to appreciate the variety of our language and to be fascinated with how elegantly it works and changes; if we want to graduate educated Americans who understand basic grammatical notions; if we want to help them discriminate poor language use from natural language processes; and if we want to give students of composition useful tools that they can manipulate to improve their written communication, then we should get into the business of teaching grammar descriptively. If we do not wish to do these things, then perhaps we should get out of the business of teaching grammar altogether, or call it something else.

[1] Mike Rose, "The Language of Exclusion: Writing Instruction at the University," *College English*, 37:4, April 1985.

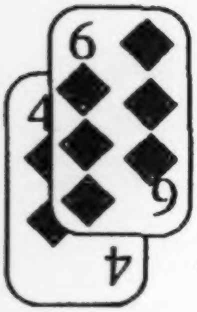
[2] "An Interview with the Provost," *The Faculty Voice*, University of Maryland at College Park, 4:5, May-June 1990.

[3] Robert J. Connors, "Grammar in American College Composition: An Historical Overview," *The Territory of Language. Linguistics, Stylistics, and the Teaching of Composition*. Donald A. McQuaid, ed. Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986.

[4] Roland J. Harris, "An Experimental Inquiry into the Functions and Value of Formal Grammar in the Teaching of Written English to Children Aged Twelve to Fourteen." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of London, 1962. (Summarized in Richard Braddock, Richard Lloyd-Jones, and Lowell Schoer, *Research in Written Composition* [Champaign, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1963], pp. 70-83.)

[5] Martha Kolln, "Closing the Books on Alchemy," *College Composition and Communication*, 32 (May, 1981), 139-151.

[6] Robert J. Connors, op. cit., p. 22.



JACKPOT
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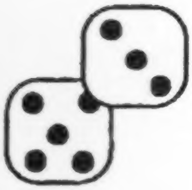
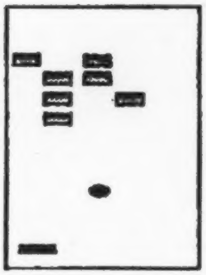
ARCADE GRAMMAR

Grammar and Syntax as Recreational Activities

The Future of Grammar in American Schools
Shenandoah College
Winchester, Virginia
August 10-11, 1990

Presented by:
Pat Wellington
Charlotte Perlin
University of Miami





Teaching grammar on the college level begins as a losing proposition. By the time students enter college, they have levels of negativity about grammar study built up through the years. In startling students with the unpredictable, we break through this sediment.

Our society is game-oriented -- one in which sports, television and computer games command the interest and curiosity of citizens. The educator can tap in to that interest, build upon the prior involvement, and catch the student unaware.

The educator can utilize grammar games in two ways. First, he or she can introduce the games as games and draw upon the reservoir of positive reaction to games and entertainment. Without the usual struggle and resentment, students establish a background of grammatical knowledge so that when the class turns to serious, intense grammar study, students have the prior knowledge necessary to understand, and the positive attitude essential to accept the area of study. The second technique in using grammar games is to augment the study of grammar in order to enhance the students' understanding of and interest in grammar while they learn grammatical principles in the classroom. This procedure uses the games to emphasize and embellish what students learn.

To borrow a phrase from Thomas Edison, grammar does not have to "dress in overalls and look like work."

[The following is the handout on games distributed at the conference (retyped for these proceedings). (EV)]

PRESCRIPTION GRAMMAR

STAGE I: Recognizing Parts of Speech

REVIEW PARTS OF SPEECH BEFORE DISTRIBUTING THE PUZZLE. TELL STUDENTS JUST WHAT THEY NEED TO KNOW TO BREAK THE CODE. ILLUSTRATE THE USE OF SYMBOLS AS PARTS OF SPEECH. SHOW STUDENTS HOW TO DECIPHER THESE SYMBOLS AND TRANSLATE THEM INTO SENTENCES. SEE BELOW:

1. ○ □ △ ♡ ○ □
2. □ △ □ ◇
3. ○ □ ♡ ○ ▽ □ △ ▽
4. ○ ▽ □ △ ○ ▽ □

Solution:

○ = article; □ = noun; △ = verb;
◇ = adverb; ♡ = preposition; ▽ = adjective

1. The boy ate at the counter.
2. They ate pizza hungrily.
3. The girl in the blue hat looks lovely.
4. The blue hat took the first prize.

STIPULATE THE PENALTIES FOR ASKING QUESTIONS AFTER THIS BRIEFING SESSION, BUT AVOID ELIMINATING STUDENTS. KEEP AS MANY PLAYERS IN THE GAME AS POSSIBLE. DEPENDING ON THE CLASS LEVEL, YOU MAY EXTEND THE BRIEFING TO INCLUDE SUCH QUESTIONS AS THE FOLLOWING: HOW DO ENGLISH SENTENCES USUALLY BEGIN? WHERE DO WE USUALLY PUT ADJECTIVES? WHERE DO WE USUALLY FIND VERBS? AND SO FORTH. TO AVOID FRUSTRATION, TELL LOW-LEVEL STUDENTS WHETHER THE SENTENCES ARE DECLARATIVE OR QUESTIONS, SIMPLE OR COMPLEX.

STAGE II: Recognizing Problems

AFTER STUDENTS PRACTICE BREAKING THE CODE, AND BEFORE BOREDOM SETS IN, USE THE

CODE GAME TO SOLVE GRAMMATICAL AND SYNTACTICAL PROBLEMS. THAT IS, USING THE CODE, CONSTRUCT FRAGMENTS, RUN-ONS, SENTENCES WITH MISPLACED ADJECTIVES AND SO FORTH FOR STUDENTS TO IDENTIFY.

STAGE III: Understanding the Structure of English Sentences

CHALLENGE STUDENTS TO INVENT THEIR OWN CODES FOR CLASSMATES TO DECIPHER.

☽ = article; 🎩 = noun; ★ = verb;
❜ = adverb; ✍ = preposition; ▲ = adjective

NOTE: "Prescriptive Grammar" is adapted from an idea in Leila Christenbury and Patricia P. Kelly's Questioning: A Path to Critical Thinking (NCTE)

DOUBLE POINTER -- SENTENCE STRUCTURE

keyed to Updike's "A&P"

REMINDER: Fragments are only part of a sentence, and run-ons (and comma splices) are two sentences written as though they are one.

PLACE A CHECK MARK BY EACH PROPER SENTENCE, ignoring the fragments and run-ons.

1. The story "A&P" which is set in modern times in New England.
2. By the end of the first sentence, we know something about the narrator.
3. First he notices the girl in the plaid bathing suit then he sees Queenie.
4. An important point is the fact that the girls wear no shoes.
5. There is one small reference to Salem.
6. "She didn't look around, not this queen, she just walked straight on slowly, on these long white prima-donna legs."
7. HiHo crackers are part of the symbolism of royalty.
8. Is the A&P a safe environment for Sammy?
9. While you get the impression that his parents helped him get the job in the first place.
10. "... I began to feel sorry for them, they couldn't help it."
11. "Now her hands are empty, not a ring or a bracelet...."
12. Going up and down the lanes, she draws all eyes toward her.
13. She didn't tip.
14. "Not this queen."
15. Under the fluorescent lights she walks proudly.
16. In the last sentence, Sammy comments on the difficulty of his future life.
17. The point of view is the first person narrator.

TO CHECK YOUR ANSWERS, IN THE BLANKS BELOW WRITE THE FIRST LETTER OF EVERY PROPER SENTENCE, FORMING THE ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION: What item makes Queenie seem out of place in the A&P?

_ _ _ _ _ _ _   _ _ _ _

DOUBLE POINTER – ACTIVE VS. PASSIVE

Remember this formula:
to be + verb's last principle part = passive voice
Examples of passive:
is taken am felt are broken was seen
were done has been accomplished will be developed

Circle the passive verbs. Then UNDERLINE THE FIRST WORD OF EVERY SENTENCE WHICH DOES NOT HAVE A PASSIVE VERB.

1. Think carefully before you act.
2. After having been given permission, we did not go to the party.
3. Often we feel the need to introduce our friends to each other.
4. Holding hands, the lovers walked away.
5. Other people stared at them.
6. A good time was had by all.
7. The books were published last year.
8. Linda danced all night and slept all day.
9. The party was being held at her house.
10. Don't swim right after you have a heavy meal.
11. Tuesday and Thursday classes are the easiest to take.
12. Handing the cat to its owner, the veterinarian smiled confidently.
13. Everyone in the class has a separate notebook.
14. The Writing Center had been operating since 1986.
15. Most of the students participated in the rally.
16. Demonstrations are generally held in the gym.
17. Is the store open on Tuesdays?
18. Were those stories told in person or on tapes?
19. Rowing that boat was tough.
20. Rachel and Jim left quickly.
21. The money was lost.
22. Once I recognized him, I wanted to speak to him.
23. Rental apartments are sometimes cheaper than condos.
24. Until yesterday, our grass was dying because of a lack of water.
25. Playing the piano is his hobby.
26. He had been hit from behind and left for dead.
27. Sandy is being photographed for the magazine.
28. Paul has moved to Hollywood.
29. The best things in life are free.
30. Over the mountains and through the hills, to Grandmother's house we go.
31. Never say "never."
32. Ann left after lunch.
33. That book demonstrates how to build a shelf.
34. The lunch was already prepared.
35. Unpin the patterns very carefully.
36. Recently she returned to finish her degree.
37. Instructions are included.
38. Everything I have is yours.
39. The demonstration was presented in the afternoon.
40. The class was taught by my friend.

IF YOUR ANSWERS ARE CORRECT, THE FIRST LETTER OF THE SENTENCES WITH ACTIVE VERBS GIVES SHAKESPEARE'S DEFINITION OF THE FUNCTION OF DRAMA.

_ _   _ _ _ _   _ _ _   _ _ _ _ _ _

_ _   _ _   _ _ _ _ _ _

Teaching Grammar Through Journalism

Tina Lesher
Department of Communication
William Paterson College

A newspaper's stylebook sets forth rules relative to spelling, capitalization, punctuation, abbreviation, and usage. Such rules are needed "when many different people write and edit a publication that has an identity of its own." (Jordan, 1976, Foreword). For many years, **The Associated Press Stylebook, The New York Times' Manual of Style and Usage** and similar works have served as valuable tools for journalists and others who work with words.

In his brief stint (1917-1918) with the **Kansas City Star**, novice reporter Ernest Hemingway discovered the importance of the paper's style sheet and its accompanying rules. More than two decades later, Hemingway commented that "those were the best rules I ever learned for the business of writing. I've never forgotten them." (**Kansas City Times**, 1940, as cited in Bruccoli, Introduction).

Journalism also served as the training ground for other famed writers, including Mark Twain, Stephen Crane, Benjamin Franklin, Rudyard Kipling and Charles Dickens. By virtue of their journalistic work, these writers adhered to the style of their respective publications. For such writers, "rhetoric is the least of the requisites," according to Erwin Canham, who served as editor of **The Christian Science Monitor**. "The most essential obligation of the reporter is to get the story right." (Snyder and Morris, p. xxix).

Newspaper rules ordain that writers strive for what Joseph Pulitzer demanded: "Accuracy, accuracy, accuracy." (Swanberg, p. 387). These policies translate to correct use of grammar, the rules of language.

As an academic discipline, journalism provides a credible base to strengthen students' grammar skills through writing instruction. Well-researched, developed pieces must remain error-free; to assure that status, it is mandatory that each work reflect the writer's knowledge of acceptable grammar.

Consider the following sentence penned by a beginning journalism student: The police surrounded the house carrying weapons. The grammatical error makes the sentence inaccurate. While destined to incur the wrath of editors and readers alike, the sentence technically is harmless. Compare it to the following sentence: The police surrounded the intruder carrying weapons. If, in reality, the police carried the guns, then this sentence could prove bait in a libel litigation.

A strong knowledge of editing would alleviate many of the grammatical problems evidenced in the work of budding writers; journalism can provide a solid education in that editing schema.

The CODE process provides a writing instruction approach based on journalistic techniques. The acronym alludes to a four-step process: **Collect, Order, Develop and Edit**. The writer first **collects** data from a variety of sources. Strong notetaking and interviewing skills play an integral role in this initial step. Then the writer must determine how to **order** the story. Special emphasis is placed on selecting the most appropriate lead, since the remainder of the story flows from that introduction. after **developing** or actually putting together the entire piece in publishable form, the writer enters into the important **editing** phase.

At this point, Donald Murray advises writers to "cut what can be cut. Everything left must add to the meaning of the story." (Scanlan, p. 12). In the writing process model, editing is termed "the polishing step ... now, the writer may want to change words or sentences so that the writing is more precise. The writer also makes corrections in grammar, spelling and punctuation." (PNPA, introduction).

Newspaper copy editing jobs traditionally attract people who cherish good language. These staffers often rank among the "forgotten" element in the reportorial chain, yet their contributions are invaluable. In a 1981 Bulletin of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, Murray observed that "editors earn their pay. They have to deal with a flood of copy, much of it inaccurate, poorly organized and illiterate." (Scanlan, p. 33).

By mirroring the work of a copy editor, a student becomes proficient in choosing the right word, checking for accuracy, and correcting grammatical errors.

To bring the editing concept into the classroom, teachers might adopt what newspaper writing coach Barbara King calls a "journalism paradigm." (Lesher, p. 112). This model focuses on the journalism writing process, with particular attention centered on such language arts skills as notetaking, interviewing, and editing. Without usurping the popular recursive process approach, the teacher provides a useful method for students to view their writing -- and their errors -- from the perspective of self-editors.

The CODE method, which I use in all my classes (middle school to graduate school), falls into the journalism paradigm realm.

Notetaking remains the principal element in the CODE newsgathering process. Foster Davis, assistant managing editor of **The Charlotte Observer**, points out that "notes are the first rendition of the story." (Personal interview, 1987). A capable newsman edits his notes for spelling and grammar mistakes, thus focusing on correctness even in the prewriting stage.

Students likewise begin the editing process at the notetaking stage of their work. This analysis of their writing, with attention paid to inaccuracies and grammatical errors, will extend throughout the entire process.

During the writing per se, students continue to deal with word selection, style, grammar, etc., and make appropriate changes as needed. By the time the student reaches the stage where he edits his written work, he can concentrate fully on making his story adhere to the rules of good writing and acceptable grammar.

Thus, throughout the journalism paradigm, students repeatedly will edit their own copy and correct obvious mistakes. As they become versed in writing/editing techniques, the students gain an appreciation for the importance of good language.

Two fairly recent movements in the newspaper industry -- the use of computers in the newsroom and the hiring of so-called writing coaches -- give the journalism paradigm additional credibility.

Computers allow a student to add, delete, transpose and rewrite with ease. Quickly-generated hard copy can be checked and re-edited. Thus, a student working on the computer will have a number of opportunities to analyze errors in a story.

The writing coach movement, only a dozen years old, has refocused the newsroom mindset to a "good-writing" mode. The writing coach, a specialist who helps reporters become better writers, "becomes the catalyst in this process of making new writers confident, mediocre writers better and good writers excellent." (King, introduction). Teachers can adapt coaching techniques to encourage students to write, edit and recognize mistakes in stories.

Headline writing, taught as part of the CODE process, is a copyediting task which demands use of proper tense and good grammar. By analyzing and creating headlines, students engage in a critical thinking exercise.

As teachers of writing debate the varied approaches to their work, they need to consider ways to bring a "real world" atmosphere into the classroom. By introducing journalistic techniques into the instructional arena, they will provide students with a credible educational experience, designed to strengthen writing, editing and grammar skills.

In suggesting that teachers experience a "conversion," Roy Peter Clark, dean of the faculty at The Poynter Institute, writes that journalism holds the key to improved writing instruction in America." (Clark, p. xvii).

In this era of plummeting grammar skills, journalism might also hold the key to improved grammar instruction in America.

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Quintilian, Syntax, and CAI

R.C. Hoover
Washington State University

INTRODUCTION

> Let no man, therefore, look down on the elements of grammar as small matters ... because, to those entering the recesses, as it were, of this temple, there will appear much subtility on points, which may not only sharpen the wits of boys, but may exercise even the deepest erudition and knowledge. (Quintilian 29)
>
> (N)o part of grammar will be hurtful, except that which is superfluous. (Quintilian 62)
>
> But to enable us to write more, and more readily, not *practice* only will assist ... but *method* also. (Quintilian 142)

A critical aspect of our professional mission is enabling our students to consistently produce writing others will respect, which I take as the *de facto* definition of good writing.

Unfortunately, clear thought plus strong motivation do not necessarily equal good writing.

Humans understand the rules of language in a largely inarticulate, unconscious way. This almost intuitive grasp of the rules of a language, which linguists call "competence" (Fromkin and Rodman 11) is a necessary but insufficient condition for consistently respected linguistic performance, i.e., good writing. This insufficiency may be doubly true for first year college students; even those who exhibit strong motivation and clear thought. Our students' store of inarticulate knowledge about the written language of given academic or professional discourse communities may be incomplete; further, it may be inconsistently applied.

Shortcomings in students' linguistic "intuition," systematic or occasional, may make themselves manifest in a number of ways, such as surface error, disorganization, and poor focus. Empowering students to overcome intuitive failure is something we, as a profession, address.

Briefly put, students' linguistic intuition fails; therefore we must augment it. To do this we must have both sound theory and effective practice. Insights derived form Quintilian and Computer Aided Instruction (CAI) address both.

BACKGROUND

Patrick Hartwell's discussion of grammar in "Grammar, Grammars, and the Teaching of Grammar" (*College English*. 47 [Feb 1985]: 105-127) touches on how this augmentation may be accomplished. He presents the matter in the following terms:

> Writers need to develop skills on two levels. One, broadly rhetorical, involves communication in meaningful contexts (the strategies, registers, and procedures of discourse across a range of modes, audiences, contexts, and purposes). The other, broadly metalinguistic rather than linguistic, involves active manipulation of language with conscious attention to developing rhetorical competencies.... It may be developed formally, by manipulating language for stylistic effect, and such manipulation may involve, for pedagogical continuity, a vocabulary of style. But it is primarily developed by any kind of language activity that enhances the awareness of language as language. (125)

Augmenting students' intuition involves helping them develop skill on both levels: rhetorical and metalinguistic. Despite its current disfavor, formal, grammatical, syntactical instruction has been and still can be of great use in our endeavour to aid such development.

History

Indeed, a rich history lies behind such endeavour. In his *Institutio Oratoria* (c. 95 AD), Quintilian, the Roman educator and father of classical liberal education, outlined the literary, linguistic, and rhetorical education which has come down to us as Classical Liberal Education, which emphasized on the manipulation of language, specifically how choices of words and their juxtaposition created rhetorical effectiveness.

Correctness was an important issue, addressed from the beginning of a young Noble Roman's education, at a very early age, under the *literator*, reinforced in the next stage of education under the *gramaticus*, and forming the basis for more advanced study of speaking and writing under the *rhetor*. But rules of correctness were guides to be consulted, not masters to be obeyed. (Murphy 151-176)

Students who were taught in accordance with Quintilian's precepts studied classical literature and the works of great orators; their tasks included analyzing and imitating the linguistic features of these works. Their imitations, both written and spoken, included translating Greek literature into Latin.

On a cognitive level, this imitation was much more than memorization and recitation. The student was required to first grasp the meaning of the text in the Greek, what Chomsky might call ascertaining its deep structure, and then reconstruct that meaning into Latin; casting it not only in the lexicon of the second language, but matching that construction to the stylistic requirements found in his analysis of the great orations and of classic poetry. This activity, manipulating language in a meaningful (meaning-full) context* involves both rhetorical and metalinguistic skills, the very combination Hartwell attested has a significant positive impact on literacy (114, 125).

Theory

Unfortunately contemporary composition teachers seldom expect student writers to be able to translate Greek Classics into Latin; fortunately, a close scrutiny Quintilian's ideas suggests an alternative. The key utility of translation is, to use Hartwell's phrasing, the combination of rhetorical and metalinguistic activities. This combination can be found when students analyze and recast text under appropriate circumstances. Two such circumstances suggest themselves: 1) meaningful texts and 2) the means to recast them. Nothing in Quintilian or Hartwell requires so drastic a lexical restructuring as translating from Greek to Latin, all their theory recommends is that a source-text be examined for its meaning and form and then recast into another meaningful form.

Meaningful source-texts do exist; the most common example is the students' own writing. Because of the criteria outlined above, texts invested by students with their own meaning have excellent potential. If 1) such meaning** is present, and if 2) linguistic analysis prompts manipulation of the text, and if 3) that manipulation clearly improves "the process of communicating their thoughts," then the analysis and recasting will engage students in the linguistic and metalinguistic activities which improve student writing (Hartwell 124-6). However, if the analysis does not, in a direct and specific way, facilitate a felt need to communicate, the analysis will not engage both halves of the necessary combination; the effort will become no more than tinkering with words to no profit.

What methods prompt students to more closely examine their own text, analyze its structure, see how well its structure carries their meaning, and then revise that structure to better express that meaning? Before I answer that, let me address one point. Who, or what, *prompts* the analysis? I use the term in its mechanical, or, if you will, in its theatrical sense: giving cues, indicating that the next element of the sequence should now occur. This is not an insignificant issue. as a discussion of computer aided instruction will explain.

Computers, especially ones equipped with text-analysis software, can both facilitate and prompt. By facilitate, I mean "assist one in a task of one's own choosing." The difference between prompting and facilitating is "who chooses the task to be addressed, the machine or the student?"

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* From surface structure (original text) "down" to deep structure (meaning) and then "up" to the new surface structure; the intent to incorporate the required rhetorical elements guiding the "upward" transformations toward the new surface structure.

** I'm not concerned with a particular origin of meaning or with the specifics of how meaning is molded in the writing process. The point is that when students invest a text with their own communicative intent, they will deal with it differently, more significantly, that with text which is not a carrier of their own communicative intent.

Let me introduce two pedagogical questions: "Who prompts the text analysis?" and "Whose text is manipulated as a result of that analysis?" In the context of CAI, the answer to the first question is either "the student prompts the manipulation" or "the software prompts the manipulation"—from the student's point of view this equals "the machine did it"—the answer to the second question is either "the student's own text" or "someone else's text." Computer aided writing instruction necessarily combines answers to both questions along the lines indicated in Table 1.

Table 1

CAI	Who prompts?	Whose text?
Case One	the machine	other's
Case Two	the machine	student's
Case Three	the student	student's

In Case One, students will manipulate language, but only on the surface "rote" level, not on the deep "metalinguistic" level because there is no deep connection between the text and student-centered meaning: analysis will not prompt the student to chain back through the generative transformations to deep structure to reevaluate intended meaning; if this fails to occur, the student cannot then chain forward again through the levels of linguistic transformation aimed at integrating the communicative intent with the new requirements of surface structure. In such a case, the student is learning to manipulate blocks of meaningless text rather than learning the manipulation of language in meaning-full contexts (real writing). This first approach does not seem to be the best one readily available.* In fact, this case resembles the rote grammar exercises which studies suggest are ineffective (Hartwell 105-107).

In Case Two, where the machine prompts students to do operations on text which the student has written and thus has invested with meaning,** students manipulate language and do so on both the surface and deep levels. The connection with students' intended meaning initiates the chaining "down," to the generative deep structure to reevaluate intended meaning, followed by the chaining "back up" through the levels of linguistic transformation, with the "upward" chaining guided by the students' purpose of integrating the reconfirmed communicative intent with the new requirements of surface structure. Therefore, the student is learning the manipulation of language in meaning-full contexts, rather than the manipulation of meaning-less text. This applies indirectly to writing.

Here, what the student learns does not mirror the writing situation. Because the manipulation is prompted by the machine, the situation is not a truly rhetorical task. By locating the prompt in the machine, the student is experiencing and responding to prompting which is inherently inflexible. The student learns to rely on answering, not questioning. If these more sophisticated, but still rote, machine-supplied questions do not incorporate a rhetorically relevant precept and a realistically wide variety of writing situations, the skills the student learns will not directly apply to real writing. Students may benefit indirectly, perhaps by having their intuition sparked. Yet they are concentrating on responding, not on writing. Because of this concentration, this second CAI approach is still not the best approach, but it does fit an other-centered (teacher-centered?) pedagogy.

In Case Three, students self-prompt operations on their own text, manipulate language, and do so on both the surface, "writing as artifact," level and on the deep, "intended meaning," level. Again, the connection with students' intended meaning initiates a chaining back to the generative deep structure to reevaluate intended meaning and a chaining forward again through the levels of linguistic transformation toward integrating the reconfirmed communicative intent with the new requirements of surface structure. Here, again, the student is learning the manipulation of language in meaning-full contexts, rather than the manipulation of meaning-less text. This time, however, the activity applies directly to writing.

What is being taught is the manipulation of language in meaning-full contexts (real writing), not the manipulation of blocks of meaning-less text, or manipulation that has indirect application to writing. Here, the manipulation closely mirrors the writing situation: the student's command of the rhetorical triangle, not the student's obedience to a mechanical Miss Grundy, prompts revision. Putting the prompt in the student, not the machine, causes the student both to question and to answer, not simply to answer. Here,

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* See Southwell; Leech and Candin for discussions of such software and its current roles and utility.

** See Cohen, Lanham for a discussion of this type of software.

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students learn to evaluate as well as how to evaluate their own writing; they learn how to apply that evaluation directly, not through an intermediary. The focus, then, is on thinking about writing, not responding to a machine. This may still not be the best approach readily available, but, both theoretically and practically, it seems sounder than the other options. Indeed, it seems logically compelling that a method of analysis which facilitates questioning, manipulating, and revising one's own text best serves the needs of the student writer. The student writer's intuition is augmented. The writer is empowered to confidently address issues of form in the revision process.*

In short, Combination One employs prompts which come from a machine to initiate manipulation of text in which the student has invested no personal interest or meaning. If my interpretation of Quintilian is correct, little or no improvement in student writing can be attributed to language analysis and manipulation taught in this way. Combination Two employs machine prompts to initiate manipulation of text in which the student has invested meaning. Some improvement in student writing can be attributed to language analysis and manipulation taught in this way. Combination Three employs student self-prompted manipulation of text which the student has invested with meaning. Here, students examine their own text, analyze its structure, see how well its structure carries their meaning, and then revise the structure to better express their meaning, i.e., they learn to write better.

APPLICATION

I now return to the question left unanswered above: What methods prompt students to more closely examine their own text, analyze its structure, see how well its structure carries their meaning, and then revise that structure to better express that meaning? One such method I cumbersomely title "The Today-Yesterday-Tomorrow Method of Predicate and Subject Analysis."

Foundation

This method is built around three things:

1. a CAI environment,**
2. the pedagogical advantages of Case Three,*** as noted above, and
3. two principles from Linguistics.

The first Linguistic principle is the rhetorical. Because readers and hearers of English expect the substance of a sentence's meaning to be carried in the subject slot and in the predicate slot, the critical role of the subject and predicate in governing "meaning," once clearly perceived, motivates students to manipulate and recast passages they have written which analysis suggests may not impart what they intend. The second Linguistic principle is analytical. Because the time signal in the English sentence is always associated with the predicate (or "main verb") the predicate can be readily identified. Once the predicate is identified, the subject can be identified as well.

Presentation

Rather than proceeding on to simply repeat in detail how I presented the method to my students, I offer the following choices:

1. to demonstrate the method using the machines and software in the Mac Lab here, and conclude our time by relating my Conclusions section and then, as time allows, have a question and answer session
2. to skip the demo and move directly to my Conclusions section, then break off the monologue in favor of a question and answer session;
3. to repeat in detail how the I presented the method to my students;
4. I'm also willing to entertain suggestions from the floor, including "Shut-up and let us get out of here.

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* This method can also be a starting point for the examination of "coherence" and "focus" by noting that, shorn of all modifiers and connectives, the subjects and predicates should cohere and focus on the topic addressed.

** with access to Macintosh SE microcomputers equipped with Microsoft Word word-processing software, version 3.2 in 1989, 4.0 in 1990.

Ladies and gentlemen, what is your pleasure?.

[The participants opted for the Mac Lab. (EV)]

CONCLUSIONS

Three present themselves.

First, Quintilian provides a sound historical and theoretical base for linking the study of the forms of a language with imparting a literate command of it.

Second, this theoretical argument implies a three things.

1. The most relevant aspect of students' "ownership" of their own text is the attendant ability to clearly sense the "kernels" of meaning it represents.
2. The three cases above, possess different degrees of relevance to helping students overcome intuition failure. Specifically, student work with those softwares which facilitate self-prompted manipulation of students own text should better enhance writing skill than work with software which mechanically prompts manipulation of text which is not meaningful to them; mechanically prompted manipulations of student owned text is an intermediate case.
3. CAI environments intended to impart actual command of the written language should combine the following three factors:
   - i. students should engage in both rhetorical and metalinguistic operations, a criteria met when text is analyzed, on the basis of that analysis, recast to meet a requirement of form, such as syntax, meter, or rhetorical device;
   - ii. the manipulation and analysis is of text meaningful to the students, a criteria most easily met by having the subject text be the student's own writing;
   - iii. "facilitating" rather than "prompting" software.

The impact of this theory and practice was pleasing. The paper targeted by the exercise appended was better for the revision. On the whole, delayed sentences were identified and the delaying elements deleted. Stronger verbs often replaced weaker ones. The number of "to be" verbs decreased. Further, the clear improvements, which students saw crafted by their own hand, drew students to repeat the analysis on their own, especially on passages which seemed troublesome. The types of formal correctness addressed by the method include six* of the twenty listed by Conners and Lunsford (403); four more can be addressed with a very simple fifty minute elaboration on this basic method which I call "Sentence Sense."**

Changes in student attitude mirrored the changes in their prose, perhaps prompted by greater confidence in their ability to produce what they perceived to be, and their grades confirmed was, better writing; not just fewer errors, but better coincidence between what they wanted to say and what they, and their peers, saw in their writing.

In general, the quality of student writing increased after this method was introduced. It remains unclear how much of that increase was due to this student-prompted own-text analysis and how much to the other fourteen-fifteenths of the course: conferencing, peer review, reading papers aloud, increased audience awareness, and growing command of other formal and rhetorical tools.

Third, juxtaposing the theoretical conclusions with the classroom results, it seems clear that this form of CAI, while not a writing instruction panacea, does do two critical things very well.

1. CAI facilitates metalinguistic the operations such as analysis and manipulation, overcoming student resistance which accompanies the perceived drudgery of textual analysis.
2. CAI allows students to perform these operations on their own text.

The key to this theoretically powerful one-two punch is the "malleability of the text" provided by video display, micro-processing, and user-friendly wordprocessing software. Such textual malleability does

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* Using Conners and Lunsford's phrasing, this method addresses the following error or error pattern: no comma after introductory element (1st on their list), no comma in compound sentence (3rd), comma splice (8th), sentence fragment (12th), subject verb agreement (14th), and run-on or fused sentence (18th).

** The four are no comma in non-restrictive element (5th on Conners and Lunsford's list); lack of comma in a series (15th); unnecessary comma with restrictive phrase (17th); dangling or misplaced modifier (19th).

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facilitate both student analysis of and manipulation of their own texts, which in turn helps students realize that their own writing is a craftable artifact, as well as a carrier of her meaning.

Having established a theoretical foundation tested by limited practice, the next step in applying the insights of Quintilian and the modern classicists will be to research actual improvement attributable to this method of self-prompted own-text analysis. Assessment of actual changes in sentence structure which follow the presentation of this predicate/subject method should be carried out, probably along the lines indicated in Faigley and Witte's "Analyzing Revision." CCC. 32 (Dec 1981): 400-414. I expect to find statistically significant results.

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Appendix

The assignment below was given as the culmination of an entire classroom presentation, was part of a plan to impart a simple method for students to gain greater rhetorical and mechanical control of their prose. It was used for a computer assisted section of freshman composition which met three days a week. Once a week, we met for class in the Department of English Microcomputer Laboratory.

The assignment itself synthesizes two points.

1. If the author has difficulty identifying predicate and subject of a given sentence, the reader may have equal or greater difficulty understanding that sentence.
2. The "today-yesterday-tomorrow method" aids detection and revision of such "reader unfriendly" sentences. An important secondary benefit of the associated method is that it induces greater confidence in students: they can check themselves to see if their writing is well focused, grammatically sound, and mechanically correct.

When you are done with the in-class credit assignment, you may either stay and work on Assignment 3 or leave.

In-class credit for generation and submission of specially modified draft of Assignment 3.

1) The draft* must include
    - a) a brief summary of the chosen article,
    - b) what Machiavelli and Kautilya would have thought of the article's ideas (one paragraph for each of them),
    - c) what you think of
        - i) the article's ideas,
        - ii) Machiavelli's ideas and
        - iii) Kautilya's ideas.

2) Draft must also include a special modification: five sentences must be analyzed for their subjects and predicates.
    - a) Use the "today-yesterday-tomorrow" method to find predicates.
    - b) Indicate the predicate (main verb) by changing its appearance, using the **Format** menu.
        - i) Indicate predicates by using the **Underline** command under the **Format** menu.
        - ii) For example, when I found the predicate in the above sentence "Draft must include at least ...." I double clicked on it, then went to the **Format** menu and selected **Underline**. When the **Format** menu disappeared, the predicate was underlined; "Draft must include at least ...." became "Draft must include at least ...." Because I did this, you can tell at a glance what the predicate is.
    - c) Find each sentence's subject.
        - i) Indicate the subject by using the **Bold** command under the **Format** menu.
        - ii) For example, "Machiavelli was crazy." would have its subject and predicate marked like this: "**Machiavelli** was crazy."

3) When you've marked five sentences' subjects and predicates, print your draft and put it in my "papers in" filefolder on top of the printer.

For Monday print and bring a fully revised version of Assign. 3.

* Text meeting requirements a) and b) was already in student's possession, having been prepared as a previous in-class assignment.

The Effects of Personality Types on the Learning of Grammar

Irene Brosnahan and Janice Neuleib
Illinois State University

Summary of conference paper

For over twenty years researchers have been studying the connection between personality type preference and learning styles (Myers and McCaulley) Researchers have also begun to study the relationship of personality type preference to the ways in which people write and teach writing, the most recent study being Jensen and DiTiberio's Personality and the Teaching of Composition. Given this central focus of personality type theories on how people prefer to learn, we began to investigate the connection between personality type and grammar learning.

We chose the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator as our instrument for determining personality preference since it has been developed through extended and sophisticated research, and it has been used extensively in other educational research. The theory underlying the Indicator originates with Carl Jung's speculations about basic polarities in all human personalities. He posited three areas of preference: extroversion and introversion, sensing and intuition, and thinking and feeling.

Jung then combined these characteristics to describe various personality preference patterns; for example, a person might be an extraverted thinker with intuition, meaning that the person's primary manner of dealing with the world was through thinking judgments backed up by a tendency to view the world in symbolic, inventive, and creative ways. Similarly, an introverted sensor with feeling would be a person who preferred to take in the world as it comes, making decisions about what to do based on convictions and beliefs (Jung).

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator has a fourth pair of polarities, already embedded in the Jungian system but articulated by Katherine Briggs in the Indicator: judging and perceiving. These polarities are most easily observed in the behavior of the individual and point to the most preferred trait among sensing, intuition, thinking, and feeling. The Indicator yields sixteen personality types derived from the various possible combinations of the four polarities, E-I, S-N, T-F, J-P. Each type has a slightly different learning preference with wide variations in difference appearing between types who differ in three or four letters.

As we indicated earlier, the second polarity in the Jungian scheme has to do with the ways in which we take in information. Sensing preferences involve clear, discrete steps or examples than can be written down, reviewed, memorized, and reproduced on demand. Intuitive preferences involve associational and symbolic information. A person exercising the intuitive preference takes in one piece of information, the smell of lilacs on a spring afternoon, for example. She then might think of Whitman's poem about Lincoln, about her grandmother's lilac garden, the afterlife since both Lincoln and grandmother are perhaps both experiencing something there, the meaning of scent in general and why it brings up such associations, and why no perfume smells just like lilacs. Meantime, a person exercising the sensing preference would smell and enjoy the lilacs, see the lush green color, notice the next bush or house on the block, see the car coming around the corner, and hear the whir of the car's motor, all of which the intuitive learner would have missed while making multiple associations. Sensors prefer facts and experiences of all sorts while intuitives prefer ideas and theories.

When we began this study we theorized that students with intuitive preferences would enjoy studying grammatical theory and would thus be more successful in a theoretically based senior level grammar course. We theorized that students with sensing preferences, though better at grasping the details and remembering examples, would not excel in a theoretical grammar course. The data from out study confirm our original assumptions but with instructive variations.

A two-year study of juniors and seniors in English education, or secondary, junior high, elementary, or deaf education, this research moved through several stages. At first the only data obtained from the subjects were the MBTI and their final course grades. In subsequent semesters, a combination of other instruments (a pre- and post- grammar test, a questionnaire on prior grammar experience, a questionnaire on preferences in learning grammar, and a journal) was added to expand the data.

The data first confirmed previous studies of occupation choice in which English teachers tended to have intuitive feeling preferences (Myers and McCaulley). Though all 16 types appear among the 95 subjects we surveyed, students with intuitive feeling preferences (44% of our sample) predominated. In the general population such preference is relatively rare (under 15%). According to Myers and McCaulley also, females make up the majority individuals in the population with feeling preference (about two-thirds of females), and our sample included more women than men (72% vs. 28%), reflecting the general distribution of English teachers in the MBTI research samples.

The data did not confirm our initial guesses about performance in the course. Students with intuitive preferences did not clearly outperform students with sensing preferences. The course GPA for students with a sensing preference (40) was 2.5 and with an intuitive preference (55) was 2.55. While revising our data, we had to rethink the nature of the course and decided that it clearly was not all theoretical: details and examples abounded in classwork, giving students with sensing preferences much room for success and possibly confounding students with intuitive preferences. Furthermore, academic achievement involves aptitude, application, and interest (Myers and McCaulley, 95-96). The sensing and intuitive polarities alone could not account for all differences. We still thought that personality type made a difference in grammar learning, but the GPA for sensing and intuition alone would not measure that difference.

Added preferences showed measurable differences. Introverts focus more intensely than extroverts while working, and judging types' drive for closure, giving them an advantage over perceiving types in terms of application of effort. Thus, the highest GPA's in this group were earned by INJ's (2.86) and ISJ's (2.73), and the lowest by ESP's (2).

These data left us persuaded that we needed other sources of information in addition to the MBTI and GPAs. This past year, therefore, we added a grammar questionnaire and student learning journals to the course. The questionnaire aimed directly at the sensing and intuitive preferences, asking students how they preferred to learn grammar. Students with a sensing preference learn grammar best through an orderly, step by step approach to grammar, with concrete and specific examples. The majority of students with intuitive preferences preferred theoretical approaches, especially transformational grammar with its symbols symbols and abstractions. Intuitives want a complex theory even though they may not be able to remember the examples that explain it, and sensors want rules which they can memorize and illustrated with multiple examples.

The final source of data, the student journals, illustrated the above conclusions as well. Patterns of interest and approach to the subject matter distinguished intuitive and sensing preferences. Intuitives were more interested in and had more aptitude for the theoretical aspects of grammar. Their discussions often referred to concepts and ideas being learned, and they attempted to relate them to other ideas or courses. When they discussed examples, it was to see if the principles work and not just to be able to handle the examples. They were, however, often bothered about details such as in diagramming even though they understood the principle of it. Sensors, however, were happy when everything was presented in specific, orderly sequence. They liked worksheets and well-organized lectures. They wanted the teacher to spell out the assignments and go over exercises carefully. They were less interested in theory and more frustrated by concepts. They liked "concrete" rules such as specific forms of noun and verb endings, wanting the rules to be broken down into specific steps.

Two students' journals illustrate a startling contrast. Though this intuitive and sensor were comparable in many ways (both English majors, conscientious students, and recipients of B for the course), they were opposites: a male INFP vs. a female ESTJ. Academically, the INFP probably had the edge and could have earned an A for the course, but although he had a good understanding of the theoretical aspects of grammar, as is evident from the journal, he was often frustrated by the details of the subject matter. The ESTJ student was conscientious and worked on the grammar in detail but never could get a good handle on the theoretical aspects of the grammar, particularly TG, which was a source of anxiety for her, similar to her experience in math.

Our research project thus has confirmed our initial theory about the nature of grammar learning. We plan to continue gathering data this coming school year, using the Indicator, the questionnaire, and student journals. We anticipate that we will begin to see how the various preferences interact in grammar learning and begin to be able to suggest individual learning programs for students with different preferences. In the meantime, we suggest that teachers learn their own personality type preferences and begin to observe different learning preferences in their students. Our research indicates that as Mary McCaulley says in her book, gifts do differ and that we can be better teachers when we account for these differences.

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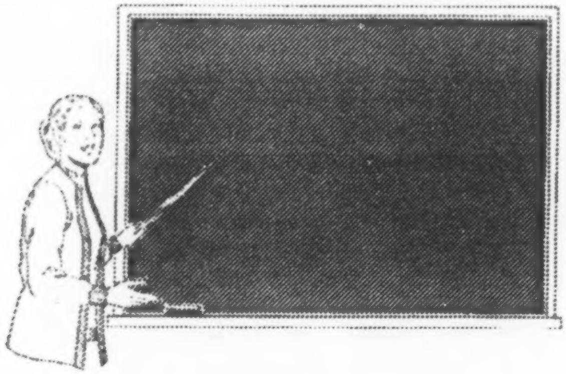


Communicative Approaches to Teaching Grammar

Macey B. Taylor
University of Arizona & Computer Assisted Learning
2634 East Malvern St.
Tucson, AZ 85716

The term "communicative" is a technical term in ESL and language teaching (Breen & Candlin 1983). It does not mean just talking. The guidelines for designing and evaluating communicative activities describe a variety of factors and aspects to be considered. In this presentation, I will focus on several of the most important ones.

First, a communicative activity involves a real information gap and a reason to fill the gap. In typical language exercises such as transformation and substitution drills, no real information is exchanged; there is only language manipulation. Sometimes teachers ask questions like, "What color is my dress?". In all but the most imaginative of situations, the questioner knows what color her dress is—she is checking to see if the learner knows the right color word or if he can answer the question in correct English. There is no information transfer and no real communication. To be judged truly communicative, an activity must also provide a need for the transfer of information from one learner to another, or from various media/sources to learners.

A hallmark of the communicative approach is the use of "authentic" tasks (Phillips 1987). Tasks are divided into three types: linguistic tasks, whose only reason for existence is to learn, practice or manipulate language; authentic tasks, in which the grammar is used as a means to an end, a non-linguistic end; and enabling tasks, the "pop-up" linguistic tasks and explanations that occur during an authentic task when communication breaks down and the student has a need to know how you say x or what x means.

Authentic tasks may be as truly authentic as planning a trip, putting out a student newspaper or making a video. They may be real world business tasks such as using a spread sheet to chart business data or a data base to analyze collected data. They also may be tasks which qualify because the learner's focus is on winning a game, not on the language learning and use that takes place in playing the game. This is particularly true with computer assisted language learning (CALL), for the majority of leaders in CALL are proponents of the games model. We are convinced that language is truly acquired in this way and that our pop-up enabling tasks (our old grammar-teaching lessons, worked out carefully over a period of years, not discarded but saved for when the student perceives a need to know) are far more effective than they were in their original style of delivery.

Communicative activities are often not recognized by learners (or observers) as language-learning or grammar-learning activities. Observers may be upset by not finding you obviously "teaching grammar," but learners are generally very happy to learn as they go. Communicative activities may appear to be very unstructured because of the freedom allowed learners (choices of media, choices of routes through the activity, choices of ways of sharing with others, etc.), but actually they require careful planning and structuring behind the scenes.

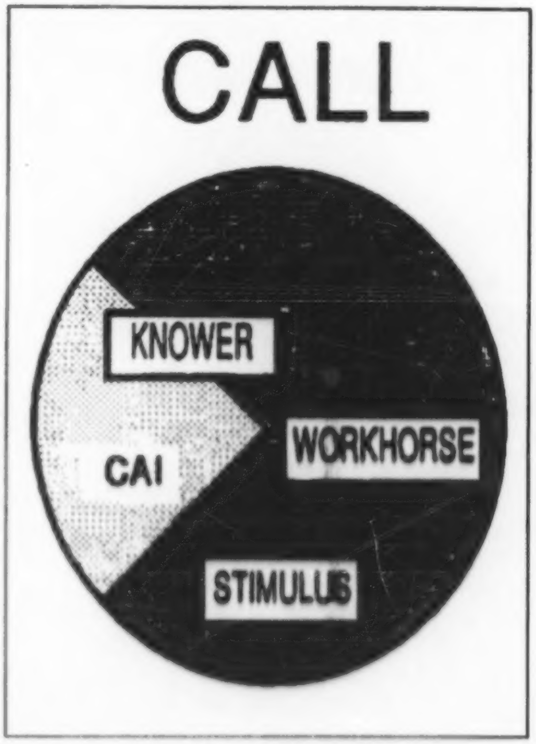
The last feature I will discuss here is that of small group work. Cooperative/collaborative learning (known as the patrol system in my Girl Scout life) is almost a sine qua non of the communicative approach. If information gaps are to exist and be filled, there must be two or more people involved in the activity. Adherents of the communicative approach are also firm believers in the efficacy of small group work, especially in activities which utilize the computer. Even with the most mechanical drill, if learners are paired, communication can take place as they discuss possible answers and the reasons for their acceptance or non-acceptance by the computer. Such work, even with programs meant for competition, usually turns out to be very cooperative—the students gang up on the computer.

Because our time is short, I will just mention briefly several types of activities that I have found very useful in teaching grammar communicatively.

First is sentence combining of the paragraph-or-longer variety. I use only exercises which produce a meaningful document and which have more than one possible solution, with no cues. When the method has been established, we also work from phrases and visual data, in much the same way as one writes a real paper from notes and various visual aids. The method that works best is to do a great deal of talking about possibilities and reasons for choices. I put the data on an overhead transparency or a handout. The students suggest combinations. I put a student's work on the overhead or I write what has been suggested only when all necessary corrections have been made. Learners see only correct sentences (unless they write sentences themselves on paper, in which case a student sees any errors s/he makes, but not those of other students). Discussion focuses largely on selection of possibilities, with only an occasional question about why x is right or wrong. My contribution is primarily to say why I prefer one option to another—explanations in areas such as focus, emphasis, coherence, subtleties of meaning, etc. I give grammar explanations only when requested. The results of a control/experimental study over several semesters, as rated by regular English faculty holistically and as measured by error-free T-units, have been spectacular (McKee 1982a).

Another activity that has proved of great value in improving both reading and writing ability is The Propaganda Game. This commercial game, adapted for use with learners via the overhead projector, deals with various types of logical fallacies. The sub-game of most obvious use in a writing class dealing with grammar is the "Language" game, which deals with such problems as vagueness, ambiguity, and change of emphasis, but others are useful with particular ages and types of learners. Play takes place in teams, with voting, challenging, and debating. The teacher's role is to serve as judge (and to read the passage aloud from the screen since intonation plays a part). (McKee 1982b)

Traditional information gap activities abound. Much can be learned by pairs trying to make their two somewhat different pictures match or by discovering the differences between the two (without looking!). There are many computer activities which lend themselves to this approach. Our favorite is a program called "Little Computer People," which deals with the activities of the small resident of your computer and his dog. As an information gap activity, we place some students where they can see the screen and use the keyboard, others behind the computer, where they must make guesses about what is going on (or ask questions or give directions to the keyboard operators to make certain things happen). This use produces tremendous quantities of the present continuous, perhaps the hardest tense to teach to students who do not use it properly. Playing this activity also provides data for a variety of spin-off activities, such as narrative reports (past tenses) and comparisons among groups which could lead to research report writing.



CALL activities can be divided into three categories, based on the learner's perception of the role of the computer: Knower of the Right Answer, Workhorse, and Stimulus. (Jones 1984) We have used this division in our book of lesson plans (Taylor & Pérez 1989) because the labels are non-judgmental and carry no emotional load.

In programs in the Knower category, there is a right answer, the computer knows what that answer is, and the task is to produce an answer for evaluation by the computer. In this category fall most of the programs designed for education, but not all are stultifying drills or silly little arcade games that get old quickly. Among the best of these are programs such as "Invention", "Rhubarb" (and all the varieties of the original "Storyboard"), and "Sequitur" by John Higgins. Also very useful are the "Concentration" types of programs, such as "Square Pairs", which allow you to create discrete item drills which students will use repeatedly. Since the computer randomizes the placement of items, each session is a new game, even if it is the same old lesson. Good programs in this category generally have editing features, which allow the teacher (or students) to alter the content. Most of the programs on the disk are of the Knower type.

Workhorse programs are all those productivity and applications programs used by real people to get jobs done. Word processing is the mainstay of many language departments, but often used only for word processing. Word processors can also be used for many other purposes, such as exploring language by using the search feature if one lacks a concordancer. Interest is growing in the use of tools such as spreadsheets, data bases, and other business packages to help learners master the language while acquiring a valuable skill. Such uses are highly motivational for older learners. Authoring programs also belong here—teachers and learners can make slide shows, movies, and even drills by using these tools. Workhorse programs generally take a substantial amount of time to exploit, but the fringe benefits are great.

The Stimulus category contains (1) programs which lack inherent utility in a language classroom but become extremely useful in the right activity and (2) programs from the other categories used in a way that evokes the desired type of communication. Stimulus programs of the first type are often programs which have been very popular in the mass market: games of various types, adventures and interactive fiction, and simulations. Both text and graphic adventures are becoming more linguistically sophisticated, with ever better parsers (the part of the program that interprets the typed-in language) that respond with sentences like, "I can't find a verb in that sentence" and which allow complex input such as, "Put the blue box in the second drawer under the book." Simulations such as Sim City offer work for a semester and the possibility of exchanging data files with students in other schools, no matter what brands of computers are used.

There are a number of programs on the disks for exploration. Most are text reconstructions. In a text reconstruction, the task is to restore text that has been wholly or partially obliterated. There are many different types and sub-types. The text may have been heard or seen, or the students may be working from only the title (with perhaps a first line). There may be help, and the type of help varies. The program may allow the user to select the set-up (what type of cloze), at the letter level or word level. Or, the basic task may be one of sequencing. Learners may work alone, against each other, or against the computer; in fact, in one of my favorites, "Quartext", the computer is allowed to cheat! All are psycholinguistic guessing games, perhaps best classified as reading activities, but their effect on writing is obvious, especially when the task is to construct a summary of material that has been heard or read. All help students learn function words; the vocabulary and structures included are up to the teacher entering the texts.

Also on the disk is "Invention", a game that drills comparative structures by using Venn diagrams. The learners' attention is entirely on the puzzle, on solving it with as few clues as possible (or at all!), but sentences such as "Six fewer people speak only Russian than speak both Spanish and Japanese" are read and reread aloud for meaning, reinforcing the linguistic items. Note-taking is vital for success. This program also allows you to print out the puzzles and as many clues as you like. We have used it in this form when computers were not available, giving each group different clues so that there would be inter-group communication and negotiation as well as communication within the group.

There is a small, public domain program called "Monster", whose linguistic goals are article usage and vocabulary development. This little program is right in line with the Language Experience Approach and could easily turn out a booklet of class stories.

Another public domain program on your disk is "Track", a small puzzle to solve. The task is to figure out which boxes go with which labels, reminiscent of SRA kit puzzles. The grammar taught is locational structures and vocabulary.

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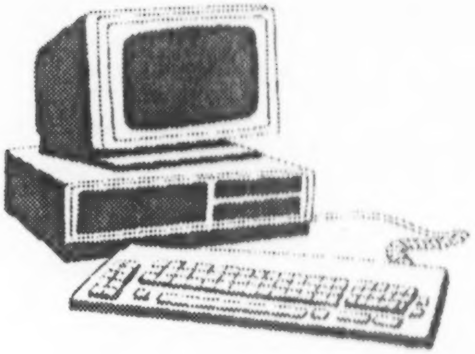
The SASE's are for the two items likely to be of interest but not to be found in most libraries.

I didn't list the software. It is so hard to find the proper bibliographic data, and then it's of little use in many cases. Also, software companies merge and evaporate like crazy. If a popular item is still being manufactured, it will be available from a discount company. People should buy whatever possible from discount vendors. The published Higgins programs are available in the US from Research Design Associates, 1-800-654-8715.



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Teaching Grammar without the Grammar Books

Ed Vavra
Pennsylvania College of Technology
Williamsport, PA

"Why do/should most people learn/study grammar?" Playing with the preceding question can lead to endless possibilities. For example, "do" most people "learn" grammar? "Should" most people "study" grammar"? Responses to these questions vary, depending on definitions of the terms. I would argue that everyone "learns" grammar and that everyone also continues to study it, usually without realizing what they are doing. Grammar is a controlling element of language -- as we attempt to control how our words will be interpreted, orally or in writing, we study grammar. It is as simple as that. The problem is that those people with the least control often do not realize the potentials of a language. That is why we need to teach grammar.

Perhaps an analogy with wordprocessing might clarify my point. A colleague called recently to ask how difficult it would be for him to learn WordPerfect. I told him I could teach him everything he needed to know in fifteen minutes. I was not lying. In fifteen minutes, any reasonably intelligent, motivated person, can learn to use WordPerfect -- as a glorified typewriter and then some. It is in this sense that I believe everyone has "learned" grammar: we all know enough to get by. But in fifteen minutes my colleague will not be able to use all the features of WordPerfect: in fact, he won't even know that some of those features exist. He may continue to use the wordprocessor as a glorified typewriter forever, but most people pick up a new function here, another there, and gradually increase their control of the program -- just as almost everyone gradually increases their control of grammar. When I teach wordprocessing as a course, I try to teach the potential of wordprocessing programs, and this is exactly what we should be trying to do when we teach grammar. Grammar should not be a question of "right" and "wrong," but rather of "how does grammar control the meaning of what I say or write?" If it is presented in this way, there is no need to motivate students -- everyone wants "control," especially over their own actions and words. But how do we teach grammar as a matter of "control"?

In the first place, we need to ACT upon the belief that people DO continue to learn grammar throughout their lifetimes. This belief is based upon the work of researchers such as Kellogg Hunt, Roy O'Donnell, and Walter Loban, all of whom have shown that control of syntax progresses in a natural sequence. In brief, most people automatically (i.e., without special instruction) master the use of subordinate clauses somewhere between seventh and ninth grades. Some students master appositives and gerundives (participles) between tenth and twelfth. Other students rarely ever use these two constructions. The research indicates that no student ever develops the use of the appositive or participle **before** the subordinate clause.

Transformation grammar offers some interesting theory to explain the sequence of this development, and the psychological theories of Piaget and Vygotsky may explain its timing. According to transformational theory, most sentences are complicated embeddings of several "kernel" sentences. Thus "This is the white house" is a combination of "This is the house" and "It is white." Note that the embedding involves a double process: the second statement is placed within the first, and part of the second statement is deleted. Now a subordinate clause is the embedding of one potentially complicated statement into another: "This is the white house. My brother lives in it" becomes "This is the white house my brother lives in." Once again we have one element ("My brother lives in it") embedded in another, and once again we have an accompanying deletion. Note also that the single, larger sentence interrelates more units of information: instead of "house," "white" and "brother lives" all being expressed in their own sentences, one sentence interconnects all three.

Now suppose that we want to add another element: "my brother is a farmer." From our perspective as English teachers, it seems fairly simple to write "This is the white house that my brother, a farmer, lives in." But the work of the aforementioned researchers indicates that it is not that simple. At this stage of complexity, deletion will be kept to a minimum. Thus, before she would use the appositive, a student would have to be totally comfortable writing "... my brother, who is a farmer, ..." The statistics, at least those we have available, indicate that the students who will use appositives and gerundives freely (and correctly) have already mastered the subordinate clause. This makes sense, because every appositive and gerundive can be viewed as a subordinate clause with elements deleted, i.e., it is the second part of the embedding process. First you learn how to get it in, then you learn how to trim it.[1]

Piaget's concept of "plateaus" and Vygotsky's "zones of proximal development" provide another theoretical perspective on natural syntactic development. When speaking of "plateaus," Piaget views learning as if it were charted on an x/y coordinated graph. "Plateaus" are thus level sections, where the line of learning, instead of increasing, remains flat. Piaget states, if I remember correctly,[2] that it almost appears as if no learning is going on at all. Vygotsky's zones are essentially the same concept, except that he views learning as an expanding series of concentric circles. Broadly speaking, we might consider the subordinate clause a plateau, and the appositive and gerundive as higher plateaus. If we examine the statistical research, students "move up" to the subordinate clause in seventh grade. It then takes them three years to assimilate subordination before at least some of them "move up" to the next plateau (appositives and/or gerundives).

Statistical research, transformational theory, and developmental theory -- all suggest that people do continually increase their command of grammar and that that command goes through some clearly defined stages. But as English teachers, we have never ACTED as if that is the case. If English teachers were coaches, many a potential Olympic sprinter would be a limper instead. As English teachers, we have felt superior to Mother Nature. Our grammar books force fourth grade -- yes, fourth grade -- students into using appositives and gerundives. We will make those little devils write like adults! We don't seem to realize that they are not adults. I need not describe the results of our efforts: we see them every day in the mangled sentences that cross our desks.

What can be done? I suggest that it would be very easy -- once teachers learn what to do and why -- to have grammar instruction basically follow natural development -- and without the use of grammar books. Introductory materials might include a few canned exercises, but 90% of the students' study should be based on their own -- or their peers' -- writing, i.e., they would study their own writing to learn prepositional phrases, clauses, etc. Instruction should be spread over grades three (or four) to ten (or eleven), in the following sequence:

3rd & 4th	Prepositional phrases
5th & 6th	Subjects, verbs, complements
7th, 8th, 9th	Subordinate clauses
10th & 11th	Gerundives & Appositives

In 3rd and 4th grades, students would learn to identify all the prepositional phrases in their own writing and to relate them to the word each modifies. In 5th and 6th, they would **add** subjects, verbs, and complements. Thus, at the end of 6th grade, every student should be able to take a passage written by a typical sixth grader (not by an adult) and find all the prepositional phrases, subjects, verbs, and complements. Subordinate clauses would be studied during the time period at which (the research says) they naturally blossom. The same holds for gerundives and appositives.

Other things recommend this sequence and approach. Fir [illegible] he grammar books can be replaced with four hand-outs, each being less than five pages long. Second, everyone enjoys learning about him (or her) self. The students' using their own writing for their exercises not only eliminates the antagonism against studying grammar, it provides motivation. (I say this based on ten years of being asked by students to spend more time on grammar.) Third, it places the emphasis of instruction where it should be -- on what is "right," not on what is "wrong." Over the course of seven or eight years, students would come to learn and appreciate the norms, potential, and variety of English sentence structure by seeing it used in their own writing.

I do not mean to suggest that I have all the answers to the problems of teaching grammar. Many questions and problems remain, but the major problem is English teachers' perspectives on grammar. Many of us simply refuse to look at the question from the students' perspective. I have suggested, for example, that third and fourth graders could learn to recognize all the prepositional phrases in their writing. A reviewer of an article objected that prepositional phrases are too complex for third and fourth graders to comprehend. That is true if we look at the phrases of adults, phrases which have long gerund phrases or subordinate clauses as the object of the preposition. But third and fourth graders rarely, if ever, use gerunds or subordinate clauses as objects of prepositions -- such combinations are, in Vygotsky's terms, out of their "zone of proximal development." If third and fourth graders use their own writing (and that of their peers) as exercise material, they will probably never see such a combination.

But what if they do? Very simply, they should be taught to ignore it. If my colleague who wants to learn wordprocessing worries about all those function keys at the top of the keyboard, he will probably never be very good with a computer. And if I tried to explain the function of each, information overload would short-circuit his learning. But in teaching grammar, we continue to overload and worry students with rules, exceptions, and errors. When will we ever learn?

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[1] "Trimming it," by the way, may be a direct result of the mechanics of writing. The hand may be faster than the eye, but the mind is faster than the hand. When the ideas are flowing, the mind may be looking to cut extraneous words, thereby reducing clauses to appositives and gerundives. I would love to see a good comparison of the number of appositives and gerundives per main clause in oral and written language.

[2] Readers will, I hope forgive my lack of references. As I write this, all my reference materials are packed for moving.

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Conference Participants

Ballard, Kim. Purdue University Writing Lab. 226 Heavilon Hall, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN 47907. H: 317/743-4443; S: 317/494-3723.

Benner, Margaret. Towson State University. 329-1B Homeland Southway, Baltimore, MD 21212. 301/435-8337.

Brosnahan, Irene T. Department of English, Illinois State University, Normal, IL 61761. 309/438-7590.

Chrzanowski, Chrystena. No. Arlington High School & William Paterson College. 268 River Road, Edgewater, NJ 07020. 201/945-0545.

Compton, Joseph. John Carroll University. 3875 Kirkwood, Cleveland Heights, OH 44121. 216/291-4152.

Fleming, Robert S. Glassboro State College. 61 Village Way, Malvern, PA 19355. 215/647-0405.

Hicks, Dale C. Martinsburg High School. P.O. Box 1044, Martinsburg, WV 25401. H:304/263-5893; S:304/267-3530.

Hoover, R.C. Washington State University. Department of English, Pullman, WA 99164-5020. H:509/334-0815; S:509/335-2581.

Joranko, Sara R. Department of English, John Carroll University, University Heights, OH 44118. 216/255-8252.

Kolln, Martha. Penn State University. R.D.1 Box 439, Bellefonte, PA 16823. 814/355-4666.

Laster, Madlon. Daniel Morgan Middle School. 125 Garden Ct., Winchester, VA 22601. 703/662-4907.

Lesher, Tina. William Paterson College. 583 Birch Ave., Westfield, NJ 07090. 201/233-9147.

Lucier, Mary Grace. National Advisory Council of Educational Research and Improvement. 330 C St. SW, #4076, Washington, D.C. 20202-7579. 202/732-4504.

Lyday-Lee, Kathy. Elon College. 415 W. Davis St., Burlington, NC 27215. 919/229-4731.

Murphy, Jean. Pierce College. 1601 39th Ave. SE, Puyallup, WA 98374. 206/840-8494.

Neuleib, Janice. Department of English, Illinois State University, Normal, IL 61761. 309/438-3667.

Oliver, George. University of Maryland. P.O. Box 1747, Shepherdstown, WV 25443. 304/876-3598.

Paraskevas-Shepard, Cornelia. Western Oregon State College. 345 N. Monmouth, Monmouth, OR 97361. 503/838-8477.

Perlin, Charlotte. University of Miami Writing Center. 2350 Prairie Ave., Miami Beach, FL 33140. H:305/538-9703; S:305/284-2956.

Scharton, Maurice. Department of English, Illinois State University, Normal, IL 61761. 309/438-8858.

Sirabian, Robert. Purdue University. 822 Dickson Lane, Rochester, MI 48063. 313/651-3043.

Taylor, Macey B. University of Arizona. 2634 East malvern, Tucson, AZ 85716. 602/326-7265.

Thiel, Lydia. Lakeland Community College. 6677 Elmwood Road, Mentor, OH 44060. 216/255-5594.

Vavra, Edward. Pennsylvania College of Technology. 30 Marvin Circle, Williamsport, PA 17701 H:717/326-9599; S:717/3266-3761. Ext. 7736. FAX:717/327-4503.

Wellington, Pat. University of Miami Writing Center. 4567 S.W. 16th St., Miami, FL 22134. 305/448-1863.

Williams, Ruth. Thomas Dale High School. 600 Coralberry Drive, Richmond, VA 23236. 804/379-9368.

Yost, Linda K. Purdue University. Heavilon Hall, West Lafayette, IN 47907. 317/474-8098.